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"WILLIAM ESCAPES FROM THE BURNING CAMP"—*Page 113*

WILLIAM THE SILENT

BY

AGNES M. MIALL

AUTHOR OF "ROBERT THE BRUCE" ETC.

With Frontispiece in Color and Eight Black-and-White Illustrations

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TO

MY FAIRY GODMOTHER,

WHOSE GIFTS TO ME HAVE BEEN SO MANY,

I DEDICATE THIS BOOK

Contents

CHAPTER		PAGE
I.	Boyhood and Youth	13
II.	The Early History of the Netherlands	21
III.	The Reign of Charles V	29
IV.	The Turning Point	35
V.	The Prince and the Cardinal	43
VI.	The Beggars	49
VII.	The Increase of the Protestants	55
VIII.	The Image Breaking	61
IX.	Open Rebellion	67
X	Coming and Going	73
XI.	Preparing for the Struggle	79
XII.	The First Campaign	85
XIII.	Utter Defeat	91
XIV.	The Darkest Hour	97
XV.	The Beggars of the Sea	103
XVI.	The Year 1572	109
XVII.	'Mid Siege and Massacre	117
XVIII.	The Going of Alva	123
XIX.	Mook Heath and Leyden	129
XX.	Charlotte of Bourbon	137
XXI.	The Hour of Success	143
XXII.	The Renewal of War	149

William the Silent

CHAPTER		PAGE
XXIII.	A Revolution and a Victory	155
XXIV.	The Union of Utrecht	161
XXV.	Varying Fortunes	167
XXVI.	False Francis	173
XXVII.	The Stroke of the Assassin.	181
XXVIII.	A Great Man's Death.	187

Illustrations

William Escapes from the Burning Camp (p. 113) *Frontispiece*

PAGE

He was Appointed General-in-Chief of the Emperor's Forces. 18

Philip II Receiving a Deputation from Holland . . 36

The Prince Met the Rebels 70

The Last Moments of Count Egmont. 82

The Dog . . . Awakened the Prince in the Nick of Time. 114

An Episode in the Spanish Fury. 144

The Prince's Steps were Dogged by Would-Be Assassins . 170

The Death of William the Silent in 1584 190

Map of the Netherlands 11

The unfathomable sea, and time, and tears,
The deeds of heroes and the crimes of kings.

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

THE NETHERLANDS
MILES
0 10 20 30 40 50
NORTH SEA
Apingadam
GRONINGEN
Groningen
Jummingen
Heiliger-Lee
Texel
FRIESLAND
DRENTHE
R. Ems
Enkhuizen
Alkmaar
Hoorn
ZUIDER ZEE
Haarlem
Amsterdam
Naarden
R. Yssel
OVERYSSEL
Deventer
Leyden
HOLLAND
The Hague
Ryswick
UTRECHT
Zutphen
Delft
Gouda
Utrecht
GUELDERLAND
R. Yssel
Maaslandsluis
Rotterdam
Tiel
Brill
Gorinchem
Nimeguen
Dordrecht
Brouwershaven
Lof Bommel
Mookerhyde
Zierickzee
Breda
R. Maas
Walcheren
ZEALAND
NORTH BRABANT
Middelburg
Goes
Bergen op Zoom
Flushing
S. Beveland
R. Rhine
Ostend
ANTWERP
Bruges
Antwerp
Roermonde
Niewport
Ghent
R. Scheldt
Dalem
Duhkirk
Mechlin
Maas
FLANDERS
Alost
Brussels
Elsloo
Cologne
Ypres
BELGIUM
Maestricht
Courtrai
BRABANT
Aix-la-Chapelle
Bonn
Liege
Tournay
LIEGE
HAINAULT
Namur
R. Meuse
Mons
Valenciennes
Coblenz
NAMUR
LUXEMBOURG
Treves
Luxembourg
R. Meuse

A sudden wakin', a sudden weepin',
A li'l suckin', a li'l sleepin',
A cheel's full joys an' a cheel's short sorrows,
With a power of faith in gert to-morrows.

EDEN PHILPOTTS

CHAPTER I: *Boyhood and Youth*

NEARLY four hundred years ago, when King Henry VIII sat on the English throne, there stood a strong castle on a hill-side in the German province of Nassau. From the little river Dill, which flowed down the valley on one side of it, and from the sleepy village or "burg" clustered under its sheltering heights, this ancient stronghold, with its frowning towers, battlements and gateways, took its name of Dillenburg. The green and fertile country around belonged to the lord of the castle, and he had the rights of a ruler, under the Emperor of Germany, over the village.

Into this quiet old country castle on its rounded hill-top there came, one April day in the year 1533, a baby boy—quite an ordinary mite in every way. No one guessed then all that the helpless little one would do when he came to manhood, or that centuries after his death his name would be held in loving reverence by a nation living far from quiet Dillenburg.

Little William, as his parents christened him after his father, was the eldest child of Count William of Nassau (called "the Elder" and "the Rich") and of his second wife, Juliana of Stolberg. Twelve years before the child was born, in 1521, Martin Luther had gone to the Diet or Council of Worms and earned for himself and his followers the name of "protestants" by protesting against the abuses of the Church of Rome. Count William the Elder, who was present at the Diet, heard Luther's speech

and was much impressed by it. It was a very long time, notwithstanding, before he could bring himself to renounce the Catholic faith, and it was only in the year of his son's birth that he finally cast in his lot with Luther's party. Curiously enough, in spite of his change of religion, the baby William was christened with Roman Catholic and not with Protestant rites.

For the first few years of his life the little boy led a very quiet and happy existence at Dillenburg. He soon had no lack of playmates, for the Nassau circle gradually increased until Count William had a large family of five sons and six daughters (another daughter, the eldest, died in infancy). Besides these eleven children there were several step-sisters and brothers, for both William's parents had been married before.

Juliana of Stolberg, the mistress of the castle and mother of these children, was a very good and noble woman, and it is certain that William owed to her influence and example many of the fine qualities that made him what he was in after life. For a sixteenth-century lady the Countess was unusually learned and cultured, for it was a time when much attention was generally paid to the education of women. So highly were Juliana's learning and wisdom esteemed by all who knew her, that many neighbouring families of noble birth sent their sons and daughters to receive a few years' training under her care. So Dillenburg Castle was always crowded with young people, and the old walls re-echoed to the sound of children's voices.

William was eleven years old when an event

happened which changed his quiet home life entirely. This was the death of his cousin, René of Nassau, titular Prince of Orange, who was wounded in battle in July, 1544, and died shortly afterwards. René had no son to succeed him as ruler of the small French principality of Orange, which had come to him through his mother, Claudia of Orange-Châlons. Therefore he thought it wise to make his will before leaving home for the battle-field under the banner of his master, the Emperor Charles V.

René's nearest relative was his father's brother, Count William the Elder, but the Count was a Protestant, while René was staunchly loyal to the old faith; so the Prince passed over his uncle's claim, and, by special permission of the Emperor, he made, in soldier-fashion, a short will, leaving Orange and his vast Dutch estates around Breda to the Count's eldest son, William the younger.

It was on June 20th that he thus disposed of his property. Just a month later he died of a wound received during a skirmish at St Dizier, in France, which country the Emperor had invaded to quell the power of its king, Francis I.

Thus, at eleven years old, young William of Nassau, living his sheltered life in a remote German castle, became Prince of Orange and one of the richest noblemen in Flanders. His French estate had been confiscated by Francis I, and he never lived there, but his property in the Netherlands was very extensive and brought him in huge sums of money.

In spite of his title of "the Rich," his father was often hard pressed for money with so large a family to feed and educate, so the news of the eldest son's

good fortune was received at Dillenburg with great joy. But to the dismay of this Protestant household it was soon made clear that by the terms of René's will the young Prince was made a ward of the Empire, which meant that he was to be educated how and where the Emperor directed, and as a Roman Catholic.

René had laid down these conditions in order to ensure that no Protestant should succeed him, and they explained his reason for cutting his uncle, the Count, out of the succession. The Nassaus quickly found that however much they might dislike this regulation, there was no escape from it, and in the end they were forced to accept it as philosophically as they could.

A few months later the little Prince left Dillenburg for Breda, near which place his large Flemish estates were situated. There was a house belonging to the Orange family in the sleepy little Dutch town, and William made his new home there under the superintendence of three guardians appointed by the Emperor. They were all devout Catholics, and henceforth the boy was bred in the faith of Rome.

Separated though he was from his family, the next three or four years passed very pleasantly to the young ward of the Empire. A great deal of his time was taken up by his lessons, at which he and two other boys of high rank—the Counts of Westerburg and Isenburg—worked diligently under the guidance of a tutor.

For the time in which he lived William received an unusually good education, especially in languages, for he learnt to speak and write five different tongues —German, French, Flemish, Spanish and Latin.

His life was not all lessons, by any means. He passed much of his time at Brussels, where the court lived, and where he was petted by the kind old Regent, Queen Maria, and made much of by the Emperor himself, when that great man was in the Netherlands, and neither fighting nor travelling. William soon became one of Charles V's pages, and was even permitted to be present at solemn State meetings of the cabinet, saying nothing and sitting forgotten in a corner, while he drank in with eager ears the discussions of the experienced men about him. It is easy to imagine how in after years he recalled portions of what he then heard, and turned the knowledge to good account in his country's service.

When next the boy saw his father he was a tall stripling of fifteen, and a long way on the road to manhood, for in those days children grew up earlier than they do now. Count William and the Prince of Orange met at the Diet of Augsburg, whither the father had journeyed in the interests of a family lawsuit, and the son had come in the train of the Emperor. William was now thought old enough to bear his part in the Nassau family councils, and his admittance to them on that visit to Augsburg marked the beginning of the long period during which he was friend, counsellor and second father to his younger brothers and sisters.

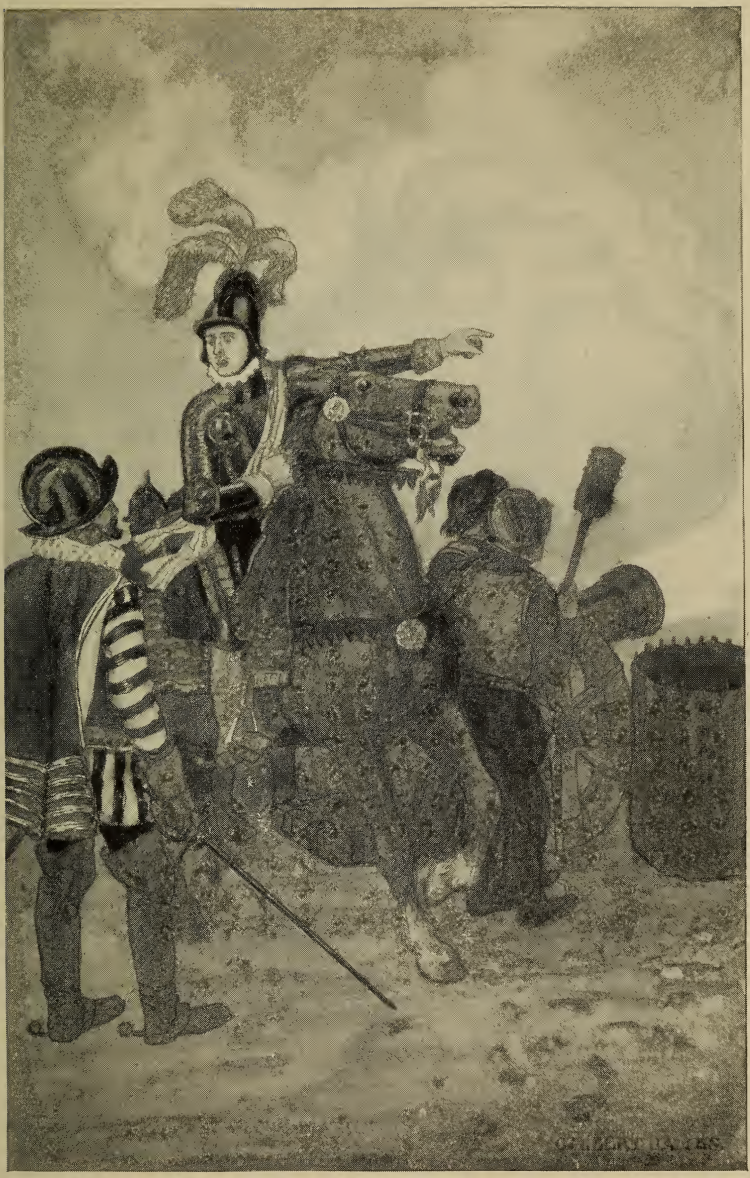
Two more uneventful years passed, and the Prince grew to manhood. A brilliant and fortunate life seemed opening before him, for he had every advantage in his favour—birth, friends, favour in high places, wealth, independence and talent. His ex-

ceptional prospects and high character attracted the attention of Maximilian, Count of Buren, and in 1550 this nobleman proposed that Orange should wed his only child and heiress, Anne of Egmont. The two young people were about the same age, and the match was a very suitable one in every way. The wedding was celebrated with great pomp on July 6th, 1551.

In view of the Prince's marriage it was considered proper that he should have a household of his own, but as both bridegroom and bride were very young, a governor, in the person of Jerome de Perrenot, Seignior of Champagny, was appointed to have a general supervision over the youthful establishment.

There was some strife over this post, certain people interested in the Prince's affairs urging that the Seignior was not sufficiently elderly and dignified for the position, but in the end the appointment was secured to him by the influence of his brother, Anthony Perrenot, then Bishop of Arras. Jerome proved to be of no importance in the Prince's life; Anthony, who is better known by his later title of Cardinal Granvelle, began by being William's good friend and counsellor, but ended by becoming one of his bitterest foes.

The Prince spent the next four years almost entirely in camp or on the battle-field. The Emperor was continually at war with France, and Orange, although so young, was one of his most trusted officers. William saw very little of his young wife, but wrote to her often. In frequent letters, penned in French, and always opening "My Wife," and ending "Your very good husband, William of Nassau," he told her



"HE WAS APPOINTED GENERAL-IN-CHIEF OF THE EMPEROR'S FORCES"—*Page 16*

of his fervent wish that he could be at her side and grumbled boyishly over the hardships of camp life.

Though he was not a born soldier, and disliked his military work rather than otherwise, he showed so much ability that his promotion was rapid, and in 1554, before he was twenty-one, he was appointed general-in-chief of the Emperor's forces—a very high position for one so young.

I beheld proud Maximilian, kneeling humbly on the ground;
I beheld the gentle Mary, hunting with her hawk and hound.

HENRY W. LONGFELLOW

CHAPTER II: *The Early History of the Netherlands*

TO gain a clear understanding of the influences and forces that were at work in the Netherlands during almost the whole lifetime of William, Prince of Orange, and for many years after his death, it is needful to go back to very early days and, beginning there, to take a short survey of the history of the Low Countries. By doing so we shall be able to understand many things that would only perplex us if we met with them for the first time in William's life story.

At the dawn of history the portion of north-west Europe known in later centuries as Flanders, and in our own day forming the two kingdoms of Belgium and Holland, was a flat, marshy triangle of country. To a large extent it was below the level of the sea at high tide, and was frequently flooded by the ocean beating on its western shore, and by the rivers which flowed through it.

In the time of the Romans, Batavia, as this territory was then called, was occupied by two distinct tribes, of different race, character, and habits. To the south the Belgæ, often mentioned by Cæsar in his Commentaries, were Celts or Gauls, like the inhabitants of the part of Europe we now call France; but the northern Nervii were of Teutonic origin and had come to Batavia from the German country beyond the Rhine.

The two races had very little in common, and never became bound into one nation, for in character, religion, and life they were the opposites of one

another. It is very important to remember this great difference between them, for we shall see as we read more of the history of the Netherlands that this strong race contrast and disunion were at the root of all the troublous times in which William of Nassau lived.

The Romans conquered the inhabitants of Batavia, as they conquered almost all the then known world, but it cost them harder fighting than any of their other triumphs; for these Northmen, who had always to struggle for bare existence in their savage, water-logged land, had grown hardier and more warlike than any other tribe in Europe. Cæsar himself wrote with admiration of their boldness and daring. They were never required to pay tribute to Rome, like all other conquered nations, and some of their bravest fighters were formed into the Batavian cavalry, which won great glory fighting for Rome, and became the Emperor's personal bodyguard.

Many Batavians of noble birth were sent to the city of the conquerors to be educated, and among them was a youth whose real name is lost to us, for he took the Roman one of Claudius Civilis. After serving twenty-five years in the Roman armies he and his brother were falsely accused of conspiracy against the Empire, and his brother was executed. Civilis escaped, burning with hatred for the Romans, and went back to his native land resolved to free Batavia. He was brave, talented, and eloquent, and for a little while the revolt was within an ace of success. Then the conquerors gathered a strong force, and Batavia was crushed anew.

The Early History

After the gradual weakening and final fall of the vast Roman Empire, the Batavians came under the dominion of the great and powerful race called the Franks. Originally a horde of barbarians who had been forced out of the Rhine country by the incursion of other tribes from the east, the Franks made their way westward, and settled in Gaul (which then became Frankland or France) and the southern parts of Batavia. Northern Batavia was occupied by the Frisians, a very bold, liberty-loving race, dwelling to the north-east, and the old Batavian nation disappeared, having been partly exterminated in fighting for Rome, and partly merged into the Frank and Frisian tribes.

The latter people, the "free Frisians," as they were called, fought for centuries to liberate themselves from the sway of the Franks. But in the end they were conquered, in spite of the words in their statute book, "The Frisians shall be free, as long as the wind blows out of the clouds and the world stands." They were even forced to accept Christianity by one of the Frankish sovereigns, whose hard fighting had won for him the name of Charles the Hammer. There is a story which tells how Radbod, the Frisian king, was lost to Christianity because of a bishop's imprudent reply.

Radbod had consented to be baptized, and when he had already put one leg into the font (for in those days a convert went bodily into the water) a sudden thought occurred to him.

"Tell me where my forefathers are at this moment," he demanded of Bishop Wolfran, who was waiting to perform the rite.

"With all other unbelievers in hell," replied the Christian sternly.

Radbod's eyes grew dark, and he withdrew his leg from the font in much anger.

"Then will I rather feast with my ancestors in the halls of Woden" (chief of the heathen gods) "than dwell with your little starveling band of Christians in heaven," he said; and nothing would shake his resolution, though after his death his subjects accepted Christianity.

As time went on the once powerful Frankish kings grew weaker and less capable of ruling their extensive possessions, and bit by bit the great Frankish empire went to pieces, just as Rome had done. In the tenth century the Netherlands passed from France to Germany, but their actual ruler was a certain Dirk I, whom the French king had a few years before created hereditary Count of Holland.

Holland (originally "hollowland," because of its swamps and bogs), was only a portion of the Netherlands. There were also the provinces of Lorraine, Flanders, Luxemburg, and others, each governed by its own count or duke, and each having its own unimportant history. The different rulers perpetually quarrelled among themselves, and war with one another was their chief occupation. Meanwhile the towns developed two important industries, the fisheries and the wool trade, and grew more flourishing every year.

During the thirteenth century a natural event occurred which set a permanent gap between the Frisians of the north and the rest of the Netherlands. During a terrific storm the waters of the North Sea

rolled in for miles over Holland, and formed the wide Zuyder Zee, where previously there had been thousands of acres of meadows and quiet Dutch villages.

At last the descendants of Dirk I died out, and the government of Holland, which now included the neighbouring province of Zeeland, passed to the Count of Hainault. Fifty years later, in 1355, William IV of Hainault died childless; he was succeeded by his nephew Duke William of Bavaria, and he by his son Albert. On the death of Albert the sovereignty descended to his son William, who had married Margaret of Burgundy.

William's only child and heiress was his daughter Jacqueline, who was seventeen years old at the time of her father's death in 1417. Her cousin Philip the Good, Duke of Burgundy, who desired the sovereignty for himself, set up civil war in the dukedom, defeated Jacqueline's followers, and made her lady forester of the provinces over which she should have ruled. The unlucky princess died in 1437 of a broken heart, and there was no one left to dispute the usurper's rights to the lands he had wrested from his own kinswoman.

The House of Burgundy, to which Philip belonged, was a very powerful one, accustomed always to have its own way, and brooking no interference from its subjects. The province of Burgundy is now part of France, but in those days it was a separate kingdom, over which the head of the Burgundian house reigned supreme, without considering either his subjects' rights or those of the King of France, with whom he was often at war.

It is not surprising that Philip, reared with these notions, turned out to be very far from deserving his title of "the Good." He bought the county of Namur from its ruler and usurped the duchy of Brabant. In a few years, by purchase, inheritance, or conquest, he was master of all the seventeen provinces that made up the Netherlands.

Over this wide area he ruled tyrannically, refusing the towns their rights, breaking his solemn promises, embarking on a disastrous war with England, and breeding universal discontent among his subjects. Revolts against his authority were unsuccessful, and the country breathed a deep sigh of relief when, in 1467, death relieved it of the "good" and well-hated duke.

Philip was succeeded by his son, Charles the Headstrong, who proved an even worse sovereign than his father. Charles was not content with his position as duke, ruling the Netherlands under his two overlords, the Emperor of Germany and the King of France. His ambition was to have absolute control over his dominions and to be styled king instead of duke; and all his life he schemed and worked towards this end. He fought incessantly with France, and cared nothing that to gain the means to do so he had to tax, rob, and oppress his people.

Many another country might have resisted this tyranny successfully, but unfortunately for the Netherlands each of its cities was independent of all the others and very jealous of them. The towns were too distrustful of one another to unite against their Duke, and each was too weak to fight him alone.

We shall see presently how in the days of William of Orange the jealousy between the different cities again prevented their combining against a foe even worse than violent and wicked Charles the Headstrong.

In 1474, the bad Duke quarrelled with the Swiss, and led an army against them. To his intense rage they defeated him in two battles, and shortly afterwards he was killed while besieging the town of Nancy. For a man who had hoped and dared so much his end was a pitiful one. His body was found some days later among a heap of corpses, frozen into a dirty stream by the cold of two January nights.

Charles left one daughter, Mary, who, like the unhappy Jacqueline her own grandfather had despoiled, was not allowed to enjoy her inheritance in peace. In this case it was her father's old enemy, the King of France, who seized her lands.

The Netherlanders had hated Charles the Headstrong, but they detested and feared the French King even more, and for once they banded together to support Mary, provided she would rule them reasonably. Mary's reply was to grant to the Netherlands the Great Privilege, a constitution which corresponded to our English Magna Charta.

Its chief provisions were, that only Netherlanders should hold offices in the Low Countries, that taxes should not be imposed nor war undertaken without the consent of the Estates (Parliament), that no person might be imprisoned without just cause, and that the Great Council and Supreme Court of Holland, which had been abolished by ducal tyranny, should be re-established.

At the time, Mary may have meant to abide by the Great Privilege, or she may only have promised to do so in order to secure her subjects' support against France. Certain it is that when she was safely on her throne and married to Maximilian of Hapsburg, she no longer troubled about the solemn undertaking she had given to the people.

Her husband's one object in life was money, and he cared very little how or whence he obtained it, so it is not surprising that when Mary died and her four-year-old son Philip succeeded her, the people refused to permit Maximilian to act as his guardian and regent. The latter borrowed an army from his father, the Emperor of Germany, conquered one city after another, fined and slew the burghers, and ended by revoking the Great Privilege.

Then he appointed himself regent to his son, and spent the years while the boy was growing up in extracting large sums from the unfortunate Netherlanders.

When Philip (surnamed the "Handsome") came of age in 1494, the condition of things was very little improved, for the young sovereign refused to re-establish the Great Privilege. I need not describe his reign fully, but may pass on at once to his vastly more important son, with whom the history of William of Orange's period really begins.

Nest of Lutheran misbelievers!
Haunt of traitors and deceivers,
Stronghold of insurgent weavers,
Let it to the ground be razed!
HENRY W. LONGFELLOW

CHAPTER III: *The Reign of Charles V*

PHILIP the Handsome had married Joanna, the eldest daughter and heiress of the King and Queen of Spain, and sister of Katherine of Aragon, the first of Henry VIII's six wives. Their son Charles was born in Ghent, one of the Netherland cities, and was all his life more Flemish than Spanish.

Probably no monarch ever inherited wider possessions than did Charles V. From his father he gained the Netherlands in 1506, through his mother he came to the throne of Spain ten years later. Nor were the Spaniards and the Flemings his only subjects, for in 1519 he was elected Emperor of Germany, largely through the influence of Henry of Nassau, brother of Count William the Elder. Besides this, by a Papal bull he became lord of the whole new American world that had recently been discovered by Spanish enterprise.

Charles V was no more of a friend to the Netherlands than his father and grandfather had been, though he was far wiser and more powerful than either. In 1521 came the beginning of the Reformation and the dawn of Protestantism. Luther was the pioneer in Germany, and the men who followed his teaching transferred their obedience from the Pope to their own particular count or duke—an arrangement which suited these petty rulers remarkably well.

In France and the Netherlands Protestantism took a different form. John Calvin became the leader of the "heretics," as the Catholics called those who adopted the new faith, and Calvin, far from adding to the authority of the ruling class, the rich, taught that the power which was no longer permitted to the Pope should be placed in the hands of the people.

Charles V did not care greatly about religion, but he was quite clever enough to see that the Calvinists who had cast off the authority of the Pope, their spiritual ruler, would soon be tempted to do the same with their temporal sovereign—himself. To avoid this danger to his power he established the Inquisition, which had already proved very successful in stamping out heresy by fire and sword in Spain.

Now began a terrible time for the Netherlanders. The Spanish inquisitors or "seekers out" were strict and bigoted Catholics—hard men without a grain of mercy. The Protestants, and all who were suspected of being Protestants, were relentlessly persecuted, harried from place to place, imprisoned, hanged, and burned at the stake. It is said that in no part of the world did so many people suffer for their religion as in the Low Countries.

Nor was persecution the only wrong which Charles V inflicted on his Flemish subjects. There was great jealousy between him and the King of France, Francis I, who was about his own age, and the two monarchs were constantly at war. It was the Flemings who supplied the necessary money, and, though the cities were prospering greatly, they were very indignant at the injustice which forced them

to pay for a war which they did not desire and which could never benefit them.

At last, in 1539, Charles, who was even harder pressed for money than usual, demanded a grant of 1,200,000 florins, of which one-third was to be provided by the city of Ghent. This huge sum was needed for the expenses of wars in France, Sicily, and Milan, and the citizens of Ghent, in order to avoid payment, pleaded that according to Netherland law a grant could only be made if all the Estates agreed to it. When Charles still insisted they broke out into rebellion, and offered their allegiance to Francis I.

Unluckily for them, the French King decided that he had more to gain by revealing their proposal to the Emperor than by accepting their offer. When Charles heard of the action they had taken he was furious, and resolved to teach Ghent a lesson she would never forget.

He entered the city without resistance, remained inactive for a month till the citizens' fears were lulled to rest, and then deprived Ghent of all her charters and privileges. At the same time he insisted on payment of a much larger grant than he had at first demanded, executed several of the chief citizens, and imposed a perpetual yearly fine on the burghers. After all this tyranny he remembered that he had been born in Ghent, and on that account forgave the rebellious city, and refrained from further punishment!

In his younger days, Charles V was an exceptionally fortunate man, but as time went on his luck deserted him, and he was defeated by all the foes

whom he had begun by crushing. In addition his hard work and his extreme greed at table gradually ruined his health, and by the time he was fifty-five he realized that he must retire from his many thrones in favour of a younger and healthier man—his son, Prince Philip of Spain.

Charles determined to make his abdication as impressive as possible, and arranged a grand ceremonial, which took place at Brussels on October 25th, 1555.

Among those present were the new King, Philip, his aunt, the Dowager Queen of Hungary, who had been Regent of the Netherlands for many years, and a vast concourse of nobles and statesmen. The Emperor spared no effort to make this parting ceremony live in the memories of those who witnessed it, and the Prince of Orange was specially summoned from camp in order that he might be present. When Charles entered the hall of the palace at Brussels, in which the abdication took place, it was William's shoulder on which he leaned.

Many other notable men of the day had been summoned for the occasion; the Bishop of Arras, the Counts of Egmont and Horn, Baron Montigny, Brederode the boisterous, the crafty Frisian minister Viglius, and many another of rank or importance in the Netherlands.

Several long speeches were made, and Charles V, in spite of all his tyrannies, represented himself so artfully as having been all that the best of emperors could be, that some of the audience were moved to tears. He contrived to make his hearers forget his demands for money, his treatment of Ghent, his

persecutions, and his disastrous warfare, and made them feel that they were losing a father as well as a ruler. Then Philip was solemnly presented to the assembled multitude as their future sovereign, and Orange supported his retiring master out of the hall.

Whatever his faults—and they were many—there was more of a popular hero in Charles than in his son and successor. The father at least was bold, energetic, and very clever, and in his younger days had been a fine and successful general.

Philip II was twenty-eight at the time of his father's abdication—an insignificant-looking man, very Spanish in appearance and character, sullen, gloomy, and obstinate. While Charles had only persecuted the Protestants because he was afraid they would refuse to obey him, Philip, who respected the lightest wish of the Pope, loathed them for the sole reason that their religious beliefs were not the same as his own.

Astonishing as it may seem, he really thought that by killing every heretic he could capture he was doing the greatest possible service to the rest of the world. Such a man was likely to show even less mercy to the Netherlands than Charles V had done.

I live for those that love me,
For those that know me true . . .
For the cause that needs assistance,
For the wrongs that lack resistance,
For the future in the distance,
And the good that I can do.

G. L. Banks

CHAPTER IV: *The Turning Point*

THE very day after the abdication the Prince of Orange quitted Brussels, for there was so much to be done in camp that he could ill be spared even for so brief an absence. The soldiers were discontented, for they were kept short of both money and food. William sent many letters of complaint, pointing out the hardships endured by his men, and the King wrote long replies, but did little to remedy the state of affairs.

In November he appointed his young general a Councillor of State, though one cannot help thinking that Orange would have preferred money and stores to this unlooked-for honour.

"For," he wrote to his wife, "we are here without a penny, and the soldiers are dying of hunger and cold, yet they take no more notice of us at court than if we were already dead. I leave you to picture the amount of patience I am forced to have."

At last, in February, a truce was signed which was to last five years, and the troops were paid and dismissed. The Prince came home to Breda to be with his wife and children, but his leave of absence proved much shorter than he expected, for a few months later the King of France broke the truce and began the war again.

Orange was busy fighting all the summer, and in the following winter he was kept fully occupied in raising money for Philip, who, in spite of his vast possessions and the treasure-ships which were constantly sailing home from the gold mines of the New

World, spent so much in bribes and wars that he was always heavily in debt.

During this winter William also spent some time at a Diet in Frankfort, which was held to settle the succession to the German Empire. In those days the emperors of Germany were chosen by election, and the sovereignty did not necessarily descend from father to son as it does now.

Philip was very eager to succeed his father on the German throne, but to his rage and disgust his uncle Ferdinand, brother to Charles V, was elected.

Orange was still at Frankfort on this business when the news of the serious illness of his wife summoned him back post haste to Breda. The Princess died shortly after his arrival there, leaving two children—Philip William, Count of Buren, who was between three and four years of age, and Marie, fourteen months younger.

For a while the Prince was plunged in grief, but public affairs demanded his attention, and he was allowed little time for brooding over his loss. The Spanish armies had had decidedly the best of the war, and both parties were anxious to make peace. In 1559 the treaty of Cateau-Cambrésis was signed, one of its conditions being that Philip, who had been a widower since the death of his first wife, Queen Mary of England, the year before, should marry a French princess.

The Bishop of Arras and William took the chief parts in arranging the peace, and the latter was one of the hostages sent to Paris, according to the custom of the time, to be the French monarch's prisoner until the King of Spain had fulfilled the promises made in

"PHILIP II RECEIVING A DEPUTATION FROM HOLLAND"
—*Page 34*

the treaty. Similar hostages were sent by Henry II of France to Philip.

This visit to the French court marked a turning point in William's life. At first he was merely a gay, extravagant courtier and good-hearted young man, and a very creditable story is told of the early part of his stay in Paris.

Each of the four hostages, the Duke of Alva, the Duke of Aerschot, Count Egmont and the Prince, kept up households of their own during their residence on French soil. The servants' quarters in Orange's house were so situated that anyone passing down the lane outside had a full view of the silver plate belonging to the master of the house. The articles were very valuable, for as a young man William was exceedingly rich, spent a great deal on his household, and was fond of hospitality and show.

A thief who noticed the plate came again and again secretly to the window, which was only protected by a grating, and bit by bit stole a great deal of the plate by coaxing it through the grating with a long hook. Soon the loss came to light and the man was captured. Laws in the sixteenth century were much more severe than they are now, and as stealing was commonly punished by death, the thief was condemned to die.

William had heard nothing of all this, for his servants did not think it worth while to trouble him about so small a matter as the hanging of a thief. It chanced that just as the man had been brought out to die on a public scaffold, as was then the custom, the King and his hunting party passed by, and the Prince, who was among the train of courtiers, asked what crime the condemned man had committed.

"He stole the Prince of Orange's plate," was the answer given by one of those round the scaffold, who did not know that his questioner was the Prince himself.

Orange rode straight up to the King, and begged that the man who had robbed him might be pardoned. His request was granted, and the thief was so overcome by this kind action that directly he was free he brought back all the plate that he had stolen. His accusers had been unable to find its hiding-place, and but for the Prince's pity and goodness he would probably never have seen his property again.

A few weeks later an adventure of a very different sort befell the Prince. One June day he was out hunting with Henry II in the forest of Vincennes, near Paris, when the King, who supposed that this favourite courtier of Charles V knew all his son Philip's secrets, began to talk of a plan which he and that monarch had made together to stamp out heresy in all their dominions. There had been much persecution already in Spain, France and the Netherlands, but now it was to be increased tenfold.

The Prince had heard nothing of this scheme, which Philip very well knew would not meet with his approval, for though William was a sincere Roman Catholic himself, he was one of the very few in that age who detested all religious persecution. With marvellous self-control he listened to the King's remarks without showing any of the surprise and horror he felt, and Henry never discovered the great mistake he had made.

It was this silence of the Prince's that earned him

the name of "William the Silent," by which he is known to all time and to all fame. It is quite wrong to suppose, as people sometimes do, that he gained his title because he had a sullen and silent manner. On the contrary, he was very gay and agreeable, and it was said of him that he made a friend every time he raised his hat.

From this time forward William was never the same loyal and devoted servant of the King he had shown himself to be hitherto. He found it impossible to feel so warmly toward Philip now that he was aware of the latter's intentions regarding his Protestant subjects. As he himself wrote afterward, "I confess that from that moment I determined to aid in clearing these Spanish vermin [Philip's troops from Spain, who were then quartered in Flanders] out of the land and I never repented my resolution."

Very shortly after the hunting expedition Henry II died, and Orange returned to the Flemish court at Brussels.

He found Philip preparing to leave the Netherlands, a country which he always hated, to return to Spain. The King appointed his half-sister, Margaret, Duchess of Parma, to be Regent in his absence, and made Orange Stadtholder, or Governor, of the three provinces of Holland (which must not be confused with the modern *country* of the same name), Zeeland and Utrecht.

Matters were not going very smoothly, for at a meeting of the States-General—a body which in the Netherlands took the place of a Parliament—the Estates refused to grant the King money unless he promised to withdraw the Spanish soldiers who

were over-running the country. Philip was forced to yield, and was enraged with Orange, who, he knew, was largely responsible for this demand.

Just as the angry King was stepping on board the vessel that was to carry him to Spain, he began to reproach the Prince for what had occurred. William calmly replied that it was not his doing, but that of the Estates, whereupon the King answered, in the rudest Spanish he could use:

"Not the Estates, but you, you, *you!*"

A few months later another grief befell Orange, for in October his father, Count William the Elder, died, leaving him head of the family. Though he had lived apart from them most of his life, William was passionately fond of all his relations, and to Count John, the second brother, who now inherited Dillenburg Castle, he wrote a touching and noble letter, saying that though his sisters had lost their father they should find another in him. It was a promise which he kept most faithfully all his life.

Meanwhile the Netherlands were in a terrible condition, for the Inquisition, vastly more severe under Philip II than it had been under Charles V, was working havoc in the country. To make matters worse, one of Philip's first actions on ascending the throne had been to revive a law against heretics which his father had made toward the end of his reign.

This Edict of 1550, as it is generally called, was one of the cruellest laws against the Protestants that was ever devised. It absolutely forbade the reading or buying of the Bible (except by priests), or of any books written by Martin Luther, John Calvin, and

other leading Reformers, and made it illegal for the Protestants to hold meetings of any kind, to teach the Scriptures, or even to discuss their beliefs with others.

A person discovered to be guilty in any of these particulars was subject to instant death, often accompanied by horrible torture, and the same punishment was to be meted out to those who knew of such doings and did not report them to the Inquisitors.

It was the Bishop of Arras who had advised Philip to revive the Edict, and when this fact was known a wave of hatred against him swept the whole country.

In the summer of 1559 the Pope sent a bull, or decree, upholding the Edict, and appointing a number of extra bishops and inquisitors to see that it was faithfully carried out. The much-hated Bishop of Arras was promoted to the Archbishopric of Mechlin in consequence of these additional appointments, and it was then that popular indignation, which had been smouldering for years, suddenly burst forth.

"*You the master rebel of all*
That stir this land to strife."

HENRY NEWBOLT

CHAPTER V: *The Prince and the Cardinal*

THE Prince of Orange, as might be expected, utterly disapproved of the new bishoprics, and from that time forward he and the new Archbishop of Mechlin were bitter enemies. The churchman was eager to carry out Philip's bigoted schemes of persecution, while William condemned them with all his heart and determined that they should be stopped.

It seemed, however, that there was little he could do. He and his friends, Egmont, Berghen and other nobles, tried in vain to move the Duchess Margaret and her advisers; neither pleading nor argument had any effect. Philip had appointed Orange and Egmont members of the Council of State which was to help the Regent to rule, but the other three councillors, the Archbishop, Berlaymont and Viglius, all favoured the Inquisition, with the result that the two friends found themselves always in a minority, and could do nothing.

William's position was at times a very awkward one, for, as Governor of Holland, Zeeland and Utrecht, it was his duty to carry out the King's commands in these provinces, and yet often the orders he received from Philip were of a kind he thought it very wrong to obey. In his correspondence he tells how he was commanded "to put to death some worthy people suspected of religion [that is, of Protestantism]. This my conscience would not allow me to do and I sent them private warning of their danger, holding it right to obey God rather than man."

It is difficult to see how an honourable and just man like the Prince could have acted otherwise, but of course such conduct brought him into suspicion at court, and the Duchess of Parma and the Archbishop, who about this time became Cardinal Granvelle, began to blacken their opponent's character in their letters to Philip, so that the King watched his movements with ever-growing distrust.

Orange had now been a widower for some time, and as he was only twenty-seven all his relations urged him to marry again. He was quite willing to do as they wished, and arrangements for his second wedding occupied a great part of his time during the years 1560–61.

The lady he had set his heart upon marrying was Anne of Saxony, of noble German birth, and orphan-niece of Augustus, the powerful Elector, or Prince, of Saxony. She was a girl of seventeen, not attractive personally, for she was both self-willed and of a violent temper, but a tempting match for William, owing to her kinship with several important German rulers.

Unfortunately she and all her relations were strong Lutheran Protestants, while her suitor was, as we know, a Roman Catholic. This difference of religion was a great hindrance in those days, when followers of the two faiths were for the most part bitter enemies, and for months this circumstance delayed the marriage.

At last, after much difficulty and many wearisome set-backs, Anne's relations consented to the match, for which she herself and her uncle the Elector were both eager. Orange promised that he would not interfere with Anne's religious views, and at the same

time artfully managed to soothe Philip and the Regent, both of whom greatly disliked the idea of his marrying a Protestant wife.

In August of 1561 the Prince of Orange and Anne of Saxony were wedded at Leipsic. The ceremony was a very magnificent one, almost like that of royal persons, and for three days afterward high festival was held in the town. Then the Prince took his bride home to Breda, whence she wrote to her grandfather that she was "as happy as a queen." However, the marriage was not fated to end as well as it had begun.

Having thus gained his heart's desire in his private life, William set to work to win the accomplishment of his greatest wish for the Netherlands. This was the abolition of the Inquisition and the withdrawal of the Spanish troops.

You will remember that, before his departure to Spain, Philip had promised that these soldiers should be sent away; but he had found excuse after excuse for leaving them in Flanders, where, of course, they were fed, housed and clothed at the country's expense.

The Prince found the task he had set himself an extremely difficult one, for Cardinal Granvelle, who was determined at all costs to maintain the persecution of the heretics, became more and more dangerous with every year that passed. His influence was all-powerful with the Regent, and, through her, he practically governed the Netherlands, with the assistance of his faithful fellow-councillors, Viglius and Berlaymont.

Supported by the Counts of Egmont and Horn and a number of other nobles who had grown very

jealous of Granvelle's supremacy, the Prince of Orange wrote many times to the King, telling him that the people's wrath was rising fast at the delays over the removal of the Spanish troops. When letters proved of no avail, he sent more than one embassy of nobles to Spain to press the point, and at last Philip very reluctantly gave way and withdrew the soldiers from the Netherlands.

Still matters were not greatly improved, and William saw that nothing could really be done for the country so long as the persecuting and wily Cardinal held office. Therefore he devoted all his energies to getting rid of the churchman. No other person in the Netherlands was so bitterly hated as Granvelle, both by the people and the nobles, but he was invaluable to Philip and to the Duchess Margaret, who wrote to her brother:

"Cardinal Granvelle is devoted to your Majesty's service, and I am glad to give him perfect confidence. I cannot say the same of the Prince of Orange and Count of Egmont, for they are incited by ambition. They have their own interests in view and only want to satisfy their passions and give vent to their personal hatred for Granvelle."

The statements about Orange and Egmont we know to have been quite untrue. It was by misrepresentations such as these that the Regent and her helpers made the distant King believe that the Prince was a dangerous enemy and a traitor.

Fortunately for the Netherlands Granvelle's reign of power was drawing to a close. All through the year 1563 Orange, Horn and Egmont worked unceasingly to procure his dismissal, and the Duchess

herself began to tire of the imperious man who all but took her own authority out of her hands.

It was a long, fierce struggle that went on between the two men, once such good friends—the crafty, brilliant, unscrupulous Cardinal and the equally brilliant but honourable young nobleman. At last victory fell to the just side, and early in 1564 the King wrote Granvelle to insist, though unwillingly, upon his resignation.

One spring day soon afterwards, the Cardinal, surrounded by a large body of servants, was driven through the great gates of Brussels, never to return.

Two wild young nobles, the Counts of Brederode and Hoogstraaten, were standing at the window of a house near the gate as the Cardinal's coach lumbered by. In the greatest excitement they rushed into the street, jumped both upon the same horse and galloped away after the retreating procession. Brederode had not even waited to put on his boots, for these two were as high-spirited as schoolboys coming home for the holidays, and cared for nothing save that their foe was on the point of departure.

All day long they followed the travellers, being once so near that they could easily have spoken to Granvelle. It sounds a childish thing for grown men to do, but we must remember that they had good cause to hate the Cardinal, and also that in some ways the men of the sixteenth century were more boyish than those of the twentieth.

"That vile animal," as Anthony Perrenot had been fond of calling the mass of the people, heaved a profound sigh of relief when he was really gone. Perhaps folks would have felt less light-hearted if

they had known of the dangers that lay in wait for the three noblemen who had secured the victory.

Philip II of Spain was not a man who could be thwarted with impunity, and from this time forward Orange, Egmont and Horn were marked out for bitter punishment when the opportunity should occur.

Hark, hark, the dogs do bark,
The beggars have come to town,
Some in rags and some in tags,
And some in velvet gowns.
NURSERY RHYME

CHAPTER VI: *The Beggars*

WILLIAM soon found that though the departure of Cardinal Granvelle had made things better, it had not cured them. Philip was the most persistent of men, especially where religion was concerned, and opposition only made his measures more violent.

The Duchess of Parma, who was subject to sudden panics, grew alarmed at the discontent in the country when she no longer had Granvelle to support her. This agitation on her part is scarcely to be wondered at, for every day matters were coming to a worse pass.

The Inquisition was hated all over the land, and public indignation was rising to a dangerous pitch. Large numbers of the most peaceable and industrious people fled to England, where they might hope to have some degree of liberty in their religious opinions. Orange, Egmont and other governors of provinces resigned their offices, declaring that nothing should persuade them to burn and torture innocent Protestants, whose only crime was that in religious matters their opinion differed from that of the King.

The Regent wrote many times to her brother, picturing the state of the country, and assuring him that it was becoming impossible to enforce the edicts. She entreated Philip to let her resign her office, but he was relentless, and insisted that the Inquisition should continue in all its severity. He would not permit her to give up the regency, much less would

he consent to have the States-General, or Flemish Parliament, summoned. It was for these two points regarding the Inquisition and the States-General, that William of Orange and his friends had been fighting from the outset.

This was in May, 1566. By July even Philip had grown a little alarmed at the state of affairs described in Margaret's reports, and in order to gain time he commanded the Duchess to moderate the edicts for a while. Nothing was further from his thoughts than any lasting mercy toward the Protestants, as is clearly shown by a letter he wrote a few days later to the Pope:

"As to the pardons publicly announced in my name" [the temporary moderating of the edicts], one passage ran, "whisper in the ear of His Holiness that I do not pretend to pardon in matters religious. Assure His Holiness that rather than suffer the least thing in prejudice of religion, I will lose my States and a hundred lives, for I will not live to be a king of heretics. . . . Neither my own peril nor the ruin of these provinces, or even of all my dominions, shall stop me from fulfilling my duty as a Christian Prince to maintain the Catholic faith and the Holy See now filled by a Pope whom I love and revere."

By this time Orange had given up all hope of influencing the King to change his attitude toward the Protestants. The young Stadtholder now saw quite plainly that the overthrow of the Inquisition could only be gained by force. While, however, he was cautiously considering new plans and projects, some of the younger and more hot-headed nobles took active measures against the evil.

At the close of 1565 a party of them attended a feast at the house of a certain Count Culemburg, and afterward they drew up a document which is known as the Compromise of the Nobles. Those who composed it were heated with anger and wine, and consequently the paper, which was a condemnation of the persecutions and a banding together for defence against the Inquisition, was expressed in very vigorous language.

The first signers of the Compromise were only three—Charles Mansfeld, Henry Brederode and Louis of Nassau, and it is believed to have been drawn up by Philip de Marnix, Seignior of St Aldegonde, a clever, eloquent nobleman who was a close friend of the Prince of Orange.

Count Louis of Nassau deserves some mention here, for he took a large share in the struggle which followed. He was the third of the five sons of William the Elder, being younger than the Prince of Orange and John and older than Adolphus and Henry. In character he was impetuous, bold and rash, a gay courtier and a daring soldier. People have described him as "a knight of the olden days," for he had many of the qualities which all true knights-errant were supposed to possess. Louis had left Dillenburg some time before and entered the service of his elder brother, whose most trusted helper he afterward became. The Prince was indeed most fortunate in his brothers, for one and all helped him in every way they could. But then he was the best of brothers himself.

The Compromise was passed on from one noble to another, and in a short time it bore many hundreds

of signatures. William, though in sympathy with the aims of the nobles' league, refused to sign the Compromise, because he thought that it was too angry in tone and was more likely to do harm than good.

At the same time, when the nobles asked to be allowed to present a petition, or "Request," for the moderation of the Inquisition, Orange advised the Regent to give her consent. Perhaps he uttered this counsel the more readily because his own efforts to form a more moderate league had failed, largely owing to shilly-shallying on the part of Egmont.

William found it a difficult matter at this time to curb the violence of the Leaguers on the one hand, and to fight the Inquisition on the other. From each side he gained, as the old saying goes, "more kicks than ha'pence." The nobles were inclined to think him a deserter of the cause, while in Margaret's eyes he was a rebel against the King.

April 5th, 1566, was a memorable day both in the history of the Netherlands and in the life of William the Silent. Three hundred noblemen, all gorgeously apparelled, marched to the palace to present the Request, which was a much more polite document than the Compromise. It asked respectfully that the edicts might be suspended and the Inquisition abolished.

After a triumphal progress through the streets, with people shouting "There go the deliverers of our country!" as they passed, the band of nobles reached the palace. Here the Request was formally presented to the Regent, who promised to give them a reply after due consideration.

When the petitioners had withdrawn, a meeting of the Council of State was held to decide what answer Margaret should make. The Prince of Orange used all the arguments at his command to obtain the suppression of the edicts; but Egmont, always unready to decide, merely shrugged his shoulders, and Berlaymont flew into a rage at the mere mention of granting the Request.

"Madam!" he cried to the Duchess, "is it possible that you are afraid of these beggars? They should have a cudgel for answer, which would drive them down the steps of the palace a great deal faster than they came up."

Two other councillors, Aremberg and Meghem, agreed with Berlaymont.

Finally, Margaret gave an evasive reply, promising to refer the matter to the King, and meanwhile to make the proceedings against heretics rather less severe.

Later in the day many of the young nobles who had taken part in the procession marched about the streets, very much excited, and boasted loudly of their success. As they passed Berlaymont's house that seignior happened to be standing at the window with Count Aremberg. The former laughed and repeated the taunt about the "beggars," which was overheard by several of the revellers in the street outside.

That evening the wild leaguers celebrated their triumph by a splendid banquet in Count Culemburg's mansion. The healths of Orange, Egmont and Horn were drunk several times, and the wine circulated very freely. Toward the end of the evening the

discussion turned on a suitable name for the league. Someone suggested that they should call themselves the Society of Concord, but Brederode, springing up, repeated Berlaymont's sneer to the other guests.

"They call us beggars!" he cried, "let us accept the name. We will fight the Inquisition, but remain loyal to the King, even if the struggle takes all we possess and reduces us at last to the beggar's wallet."

Amid loud shouts of applause he took from a page a wallet and wooden bowl of the kind carried by all beggars at the time; he hung the wallet round his neck, filled the bowl with wine, and shouted "Long live the Beggars!" It was a cry that was to strike terror into brave hearts for many years to come.

"Long live the Beggars!" echoed all the guests, and each in turn drank from the bowl and swore to be true to his fellows. One of the company composed an impromptu rhyme, which all repeated. It ran—

> "By the salt, by the bread, by the wallet yet,
> The Beggars will not change, no matter how they fret."

In the midst of the excitement Orange, Egmont and Horn entered the room to fetch Hoogstraaten to a meeting of the Council, and to urge the half-drunk revellers to disperse. They were greeted boisterously, and were not allowed to escape until they had honoured the new toast of "Long live the King and the Beggars!"

The seasons came, the seasons passed,
They watched their fellows die;
But still their thought was forward cast,
Their courage still was high.
HENRY NEWBOLT

CHAPTER VII: *The Increase of the Protestants*

AFTER the great banquet at which the Beggars came into existence, their first action was to adopt a dress that accorded with their name. They chose a costume of coarse grey frieze, such as was worn only by the poorest people. The doublet and hose were made very plainly, with only a single ornament, consisting of a device which some thought was a monk's cowl and others called a fool's or jester's cap. The monkish hood, of course, was a hit at the Cardinal, and the cap and bells stood for the foolish gibe which had originated the Beggars' name.

The Regent did not object that her tyrant, the Cardinal, should be thus ridiculed, but soon afterward, thinking that the jest was going rather too far, she insisted that the emblems should be removed from the costume. In their place was embroidered either a bundle of arrows or a wheatsheaf, both of which signified unity. Nearly all the nobles, as well as their servants, wore this livery, and Egmont even dined in it at the Duchess's own table.

When the news spread through the country that the Regent had promised to moderate the edicts, hope and joy began to revive in people's hearts. Those in hiding or across the borders started coming back to their old homes when they learnt that

Margaret had ordered the inquisitors to conduct their cruel work "modestly and discreetly."

Unfortunately for the Reformers, an example of the Regent's moderation was soon given which brought fear anew into every Protestant heart.

A young Protestant weaver of Oudenarde, Hans Tiskaen by name, one day threw down an article in one of the churches as a public protest against Roman Catholicism. Afterward he went peaceably home, but officers of the Inquisition followed and arrested him.

A few days later the unfortunate young man's right hand, with which he had committed his offence, was cut off, and, as this brutal punishment was not thought severe enough, he was then tied to a stake in the market-place and slowly burnt to death. It is some little comfort to know that through all the horrible pain he suffered he behaved with the greatest courage.

About the same time the Duchess of Parma sent orders that a Protestant imprisoned in another part of Flanders should be done to death in the same way as Hans Tiskaen.

Such cruelties had been practised many times before, but now the Netherlanders had put faith in Margaret's promises of moderation, and had hoped never to witness such heart-breaking sights again. It is little wonder that their minds became full of an intense bitterness and hatred toward the rulers they could neither trust nor respect.

Yet it shows us more clearly than anything else could do of what grand stuff the Reformers and their religion were made, that, in spite of all persecution

the Protestants continued to increase in numbers. Every day fresh converts joined the ranks, braving death by torture in doing so; and one of the most important new believers in the year 1566, a few months after the Request, was William of Orange himself.

Born of Lutheran parentage, but educated in the older faith, the Prince had for years been a sincere though not a strict Roman Catholic. But as he grew older his mind turned increasingly to Protestantism. Soon the King and the Regent began to suspect him of heresy, and in the summer of this year a secretary wrote definitely to Philip, "The Prince of Orange has changed his religion."

At first he seems to have been more in sympathy with the Lutheran form, which had been adopted years before by his father; in later years he was undoubtedly attracted to the Calvinists. But all through his life William's aim was for a religion of compromise, that would do away with the many Protestant sects and make for peace in the land. He was probably the first man in Europe to set before himself the ideal of toleration of all beliefs that we enjoy to-day. As he told a messenger sent by the Regent to win him back to the Catholic Church, "The hearts and wills of men are things not to be forced by any outward power whatever." His motto in religious matters might be said to have been, "Live and let live."

As the Protestants grew in numbers they felt ever more strongly the need of services of their own. All the churches belonged to the Catholics, so men and women of the reformed faith began to hear

sermons from their ministers out in the fields or woods, or, as time went on and their strength increased, in the market-places of the villages and towns.

"It is said that the first field-preaching in the Netherlands took place in June, 1566, and was held in the neighbourhood of Ghent," says Mr Wylie, in his *History of Protestantism*. "The preacher was Hermann Modet, who had formerly been a monk, but was now the Reformed pastor at Oudenarde.

"The Government 'scout,' as the head of the executive was named, having got scent of the meeting, mounted his horse and galloped off to disperse it. Arriving on the scene, he boldly rode in amongst the multitude, holding a drawn sword in one hand and a pistol in the other, and made a dash at the minister with intent to apprehend him. Modet, making off quickly, concealed himself in a neighbouring wood.

"The people, surprised and without arms, appeared for a moment as if they would disperse; but their courage rallying, they plentifully supplied themselves with stones, in lack of other weapons, and saluted the officer with such a shower of missiles on all sides that, throwing away his sword and pistol, he begged for quarter, to which his captors admitted him. He escaped with his life, although badly bruised."

We can imagine that this man was not very anxious to stop an open-air sermon again!

Philip attempted to put down the field-preaching by issuing proclamations which threatened death to all who took any part in the open-air services. But

Increase of the Protestants

Protestantism was growing beyond any control that a distant tyrant could exercise, and, in spite of the heavy punishments that were threatened, the preaching spread till hardly a town or village in the Netherlands was free of it.

It was just at that time, when all Protestant minds were irritated beyond endurance by the forbidding of the preachings, and the violent speeches of the Wild Beggars, that some of the rougher and more excitable Reformers disgraced their cause by a childish and wanton act of destruction.

Before a midnight breaks in storm,
Or herded sea in wrath,
Ye know what wavering gusts inform
The greater tempest's path.

RUDYARD KIPLING

CHAPTER VIII: *The Image Breaking*

IN the Netherlands the centre of the Protestant movement at this time was the city of Antwerp, which was overrun with Calvinists, Lutherans and Anabaptists. Louis of Nassau, Brederode and several other important Beggars were in the city in the summer of 1566, and their presence encouraged the Protestants to go further than they had ever done before.

Open-air preachings, which were attended by thousands of people, were held everywhere in Antwerp and its neighbourhood, and were even protected from Catholic interruption by armed men. Hawkers in the streets and Protestant tradesmen at their booths sold the toy bowls and wallets of the Beggars and copies of a medal which the new society had had specially made.

The Regent grew very much alarmed at the state of affairs, for although she had ordered that the field preachings should be strictly put down, there was no man or body of men in Antwerp powerful enough to put a stop to them. She knew William's influence over the people, and, though she was continually telling the King in her letters that Orange was a heretic and a traitor, now she begged him to go to Antwerp. There he was to suppress the open-air services and quiet the excited city.

Before the Prince set out he told Margaret frankly that it was useless to try to stop the preachings, for the Protestants must and would have services of their own.

On his arrival he found that it was impossible to carry out the Duchess's instructions in full. The best he could do was to arrange that the preachings should be forbidden in the city itself, but permitted outside the walls, and that an armed force should be on the spot to keep perfect order.

He then wrote to the Duchess telling her of these regulations, but added that though Antwerp was quiet for the moment much excitement and discontent still prevailed. He warned Margaret that he could only answer for the city so long as he himself was there, for nothing but his influence over the townsfolk prevented riots and other disorders.

Unfortunately the Regent had urgent need of him in Brussels, and in spite of his words she insisted that he should leave Antwerp. The Prince submitted, and departed with a foreboding of evil, which came to pass only too soon.

The 18th of August was always a great festival in Antwerp, for on that day the Roman Catholics celebrated the feast of the Virgin Mary, to whom their beautiful cathedral was dedicated. Every man, woman and child had a holiday, and it was the custom to carry a great image of Our Lady in stately procession through the city.

Usually the people thronged the streets, and watched, bareheaded and respectful, the passing of the image; but this year a rabble band followed the procession, and greeted the statue with scorn and rude jests.

"Mayken, Mayken (little Mary)," they cried loudly, "your hour is come. This is your last walk abroad. The city is tired of you."

So rude did the crowd become that the priests thought it wise to make the march through the city shorter than usual, and to take the image back to the safety of the cathedral. They did not place it in its ordinary position at the west door, where the people could come to render it homage, but behind a strong iron railing in the choir.

Early the next morning a large crowd collected outside the cathedral, and when it was found that the image was not in the usual place a howl of derision went up from dozens of throats.

"What, Mayken?" they sneered, "are you terrified so soon, that you have flown to your nest thus early? Beware, Mayken! Your hour is fast approaching."

Their next action was to shout many times, "Long live the Beggars!" and to bid the lifeless image do the same. Then they wandered idly about the cathedral, scoffing at the many beautiful things it contained.

If it had not been for one mischievous, ragged youth probably nothing more serious would have happened. This lad was in a reckless mood, and, climbing up into the pulpit, he began to address the crowd, mocking the priest's way of preaching so as to make it appear ridiculous.

Some people clapped their hands, others cried "Shame!" and tried to pull him from the pulpit, others again seized the opportunity to raise a fresh shout of "Long live the Beggars!" The young man struggled with those who were holding him, and still went on with his mockery. At last a young Catholic sailor grew so wrathful that he

climbed up the back of the pulpit and flung the jeering youth violently to the ground. He was pulled headlong down himself in the struggle with his foe.

Then tumult reigned. Those in the crowd who had encouraged the mock preacher hurried to his rescue, while others upheld the sailor, who, a minute later, was wounded by a pistol shot. The people in the cathedral were some of the roughest in Antwerp, and they had been very much excited for days. Now this one little event was enough to change their discontented feelings to such fury and madness that they were hardly responsible for what they did. In the dim shadows of the cathedral they fought with daggers and cudgels, and it was only with great difficulty that they were put outside the building at nightfall.

Next morning the temper of the rabble was even more ugly than on the previous day, and no power in the city could withstand or even check it. Fierce men forced their way into the cathedral, and, maddened by all they had suffered from the Catholics and the Inquisition, several hundred of them set to work to wreck the stately building.

They dragged down "Mayken," tore off her embroidered garments and smashed her into a thousand pieces. With the help of axes, bludgeons, pulleys and other weapons all the statues were thrown down and broken, all the pictures snatched from their places, the wine used in the sacraments drunk to the health of the Beggars, the gorgeous vestments of the priests donned over the shabby garb of the rioters.

The Image Breaking

Shouting wild, bitter words, men climbed to dizzy heights near the roof to break the beautiful stained glass windows and wall ornaments. As night came on the work of destruction was lighted by women of the worst character, who carried the wax candles they had seized from the altar itself. When the early summer dawn broke, the most magnificent cathedral in all northern Europe was utterly despoiled and ruined.

Even this act of wanton destruction was not enough to satisfy the rioters' fury. Shouting again and again their cry of "Long live the Beggars!" the small, frenzied mob of image-breakers dashed through the whole of Antwerp. As they went they wrecked every church, every statue, shrine or cross they found upon their path, and, breaking into the monasteries and convents, despoiled them also and turned their occupants adrift in the street. Fortunately they stopped short at the injury of inanimate things, and not a single person in Antwerp was wounded or robbed during the three days and nights the outbreak lasted. As one historian wrote, the rioters warred with graven images, but not with the living.

The same thing happened in all cases—for the image-breaking in Antwerp was followed by similar disturbances in many parts of the Netherlands. Some provinces—the more strongly Catholic ones—were free of outbreaks, but in other cases as many as four hundred churches were sacked in a single province. The worst riots of all, except that in Antwerp, took place in the towns of Tournay, Mechlin and Valenciennes.

It was not the Beggars who were responsible for the image-breaking. Wild as they were, they never stooped to such work as this. In each town it was accomplished by the scum of the citizens, rough, passionate people of bad character, who borrowed the Beggars' cry for their own discreditable purposes. The Beggars themselves and the main body of Protestants all over the country were equally out of sympathy with the image-breakers, who did the Reformed cause more harm than good.

The immediate result of the riots was that the Duchess Margaret at last became convinced that something must be done to pacify the country. A few days later she very unwillingly signed an agreement with Louis of Nassau and the Beggars, in which she declared the Inquisition at an end and granted liberty of worship in all places where Protestant preaching had already taken place. The nobles, on their side, promised to support the Regent so long as these pledges were kept.

This Accord, as it was named, caused the greatest joy all through the Netherlands. At last, people felt, the Inquisition was at an end.

So he died for his faith? That was fine,
More than most of us do.
ROBERT BROWNING

CHAPTER IX: *Open Rebellion*

WHEN Philip heard of the image-breaking in the Netherlands, his rage knew no bounds, but his resolution never weakened for a moment.

There was one thing that the riots made clear to him at last, namely, that the Protestants had grown too strong for Margaret's government, and that, if the country were not to be lost to Spain, a more powerful force than any as yet in the Netherlands must be sent to support the Edicts.

Philip laid his plans at once, but time was needed to carry them out, so he raised no objection when his sister wrote privately to tell him that she had been forced to sign the Accord. It suited his plans just then that the country should be kept quiet and contented until the army he was collecting could reach the Low Countries.

Meanwhile the Flemish people, never suspecting that once more their King meant to break faith with them, were rejoicing that at last, as they thought, the reign of the Inquisition was over. Only Orange and his friends, who knew better than to trust Philip II, were quietly preparing for the struggle which they saw must come.

At this time no one, not even the Prince himself, knew the courage and strength that the little, waterlogged land possessed; no one dreamt that the Netherlanders, unaided, could stand successfully

against the most powerful country in Europe. The leaders of the Reformed party accordingly sought help outside Flanders, and Count Louis of Nassau went on many journeys for his brother to the Protestant courts of Europe.

But for one reason or another, the Lutheran Princes of Germany, the French Huguenots and Queen Elizabeth of England were all unable to aid Flanders in her struggle.

By this time matters had gone so far that there was no more pretence at friendliness between William and the Government. He and the Duchess were now open enemies, and a close watch was kept on all his doings, which were reported by Margaret to the King. In self-defence, the Prince placed spies of his own at the Spanish court, and soon these secret informers were so increased by both parties that every private plan made by one was quickly known to the other.

This spying seems to us of to-day a hateful and unworthy thing, and at first one wonders how so honourable a man as the Prince of Orange could stoop to it. But it must be remembered that William lived, not in the twentieth, but in the sixteenth century, when spying was the custom of the age and was one of the ordinary precautions employed by all monarchs and statesmen.

The Prince plainly saw that without an organized party he could do nothing, and his first care was to gain promises of support from his friends. The Beggars, with Brederode and Count Louis at their head, were with him to a man, but, to his intense disappointment, Egmont, the man on whom he placed

the most reliance, was too loyal or too weak to consent to rebel against the King.

In spite of the fact, which Egmont well knew, that Philip had determined on his death, as well as those of Horn and Orange, the Count was simple enough to believe that by trusting the King all would yet be well.

Horn was despairing and angry, very indignant at the cruelties of the Government, and with many private grievances against the royal family of Spain. He had spent his whole fortune in the service of Philip, had done his best to prevent civil war during the recent risings, and in return his character had been continually blackened by the Regent. Now he was determined to retire from court life, which he disliked, and from the service of the master who had treated him so ungratefully.

Meanwhile the Government had recovered from the shock of the image-breaking, and was taking vigorous measures with the towns where the worst rioting had occurred. These were, apart from Antwerp, where the trouble began, Tournay, Mechlin and Valenciennes, all three of which were in the southern part of the Netherlands, which is now either Northern France or Belgium. Though circumstances afterward changed, it was here that the Reformation was fiercest and strongest in its early years.

Tournay and Mechlin were soon subdued by the armed forces which the Duchess sent against them, but Valenciennes had been a sanctuary town for criminals since Roman days, and consequently possessed a bolder and more rebellious spirit. A further cause for the resistance it made was the

presence of Guido de Bray and Peregrine de la Grange, two daring Calvinist preachers who had turned Valenciennes into a very hotbed of heresy and discontent.

A few weeks before the Christmas of 1566, a Spanish general named Noircarmes appeared before the walls with a body of troops and demanded admission to the city. Valenciennes had very strong fortifications, and was considered almost impossible to capture, so the Huguenot, de la Grange, sent back a defiant answer.

"May I grow as mute as a fish and may my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth," he said, "before I persuade my people to accept a garrison of cruel soldiers, who will trample upon their liberties and their beliefs."

Thereupon Noircarmes besieged the town, and cut to pieces a rabble army which a certain Peter Cornaille, who had been by turns, locksmith, preacher and general, led to its relief. Brederode was busy with wild schemes and wilder attempts to defeat Noircarmes, but only succeeded in injuring the Prince of Orange's cause by his recklessness.

In addition to this, Brederode was the leading spirit in the tumult which followed at Antwerp, where fifteen thousand men rose in revolt. William's coolness and wise leadership then showed in strong contrast with Brederode's well-meant, violent efforts. Almost single-handed, and at great risk to his life, the Prince met the rebels and finally succeeded in subduing the city.

The disturbance lasted for several days, but fortunately no blood was shed, and in the end the

"THE PRINCE MET THE REBELS"—*Page 68*

rebels joined with Orange in shouting "Long live the King!" It was the last time in his life that William ever raised that cry.

If this and other outbreaks had been successful, an army might have been able to go to Valenciennes in time to save it. The citizens fought and endured bravely during the siege, but after three months they were forced to surrender. Noircarmes undertook that the inhabitants' lives should be spared and that the town should not be sacked, but, like most of this Spaniard's promises, this was a "piecrust" one—made only to be broken. As soon as the victors entered the walls many important citizens were arrested, and the soldiers were let loose to rob and murder at their pleasure.

De la Grange and de Bray, the two Protestant ministers, fled for their lives by the water gate, in the company of young Herlin, the son of one of the imprisoned burghers.

It was late in the day when they left the conquered town, and after going a few miles they halted, weary and footsore, at a country inn and called for supper. Unfortunately a peasant at the tavern recognized them, and carried the news of their whereabouts to the Spanish troops. The fugitives were arrested and taken before Noircarmes. Herlin and his father suffered instant execution, while the two preachers were condemned to death, and meanwhile were put in a horrible dungeon and heavily loaded with chains.

They were visited in prison by a Roman Catholic lady, who wished to see in what manner heretics would bear suffering for conscience' sake; she asked

them how they could eat, drink or sleep while they were enduring such discomforts.

"Madam," answered de Bray calmly, "the cause and my good conscience uphold me. I count these iron fetters more honourable than any of the gold chains and rings which adorn my oppressors."

A little later these brave men went to their death in the same confident and joyful spirit. To the last they encouraged their followers to remain true to their faith, and declared that their only offence against the King was that they had preached the Gospel to Christians in a Christian land.

Take thy banner! and beneath
The battle cloud's encircling wreath,
Guard it till our homes are free!
Guard it! God will prosper thee!
HENRY W. LONGFELLOW

CHAPTER X: *Coming and Going*

WHILE the little patriot band of Netherlanders were making their first stand for religion's sake, and while their efforts at Valenciennes were ending in utter defeat, Philip II, far away in Spain, was anything but idle. He had gathered an army of his finest soldiers—and in those days Spanish troops were the best in the world—and ordered them to the rebellious provinces to crush all discontent.

Philip had declared again and again that he would come himself to the Netherlands, but he never intended to do so. Instead, he placed at the head of this avenging army a man who was the foremost general of his day; his name was Ferdinand de Toledo, Duke of Alva, and he had won fame on nearly every battle-field of the past thirty years.

Alva was a splendid soldier, but a merciless man, as bigoted a Catholic as the King himself, proud, ferocious and treacherous. Among his few virtues were bravery, sincerity and determination. He really believed that the rooting out of Protestantism was a noble work that would bring blessings on the man who undertook it. It seems an amazing thing to us, but we must remember that the Pope taught this doctrine, and thousands of Roman Catholics accepted it without question.

In appearance the new commander was a striking figure, for he was tall and thin, with a long, narrow face that always wore a stern expression, black eyes and hair, and a beard of the same hue.

Before Alva quitted Spain with his troops, Philip gave him strict orders that the discontent in the Netherlands was to be stamped out, whatever it might cost in lives and money. Furthermore, the Duke was first of all to "seize the Prince, bring him to execution within twenty-four hours," and then to punish with death all prominent men who had taken any part in the recent disturbances. Of these the Counts of Egmont and Horn were specially mentioned.

The Duchess had expected her brother to come in person, as he had so often promised, and she was deeply dismayed when, in the spring of 1567, she learnt that Alva and his army were on their way to the Low Countries. In vain she protested that the Duke's name was hated through the length and breadth of the country; Philip did not pay the slightest heed to her words, and every day brought Alva one march nearer his journey's end.

In the month of August he entered Belgium, with a proud word and a boast on his lips.

"I have tamed men of iron," he said, remembering his many past victories, "shall I not tame these men of butter?" The time came when he did not hold his new foes in such light esteem.

The meeting between Alva and the Regent was not very friendly, for though Margaret had constantly complained to her brother of the hardness of her lot, and had more than once begged him to let her

give up the Regency, she was very indignant that Alva should have been appointed to succeed her in command after she had come through all the recent troubles and the country was tranquil again.

She did not understand that the image-breaking and the rebellions which followed them were not the whole of the disturbance, but only the prelude to a mighty struggle. On the other hand, she knew the state of feeling in the Netherlands far better than Alva did, and would have bowed to it. She felt—and rightly, as events proved—that the new general's policy of stern suppression would end disastrously.

The Duke's first care, after his arrival, was to carry out the King's commands as to the noblemen whom Philip had so violently condemned.

It was an easy matter to arrest the two Counts. Egmont had known for months of the King's intentions toward him, but again and again he refused to believe the danger in which he stood. He had been one of those who had met the Duke on his arrival, and Alva had treated him in so friendly a fashion that the Count foolishly allowed his fears to be lulled to rest. His friends—and even Alva's own son, Don Frederic—warned him to flee in time, but he only laughed them to scorn and persuaded Horn to do the same.

The end came quickly for these two brave and honourable, but unwise, nobles. Alva had not been in the Netherlands three weeks before he contrived to arrest them both at his own house, where he had invited them and others to dine. This was black treachery toward his guests, but the Duke was a man

who believed that all things were right if done in the service of his master.

Unfortunately for him, he was not so successful in another part of his mission, for he had arrived in the Low Countries only to find that the chief offender, William the Silent, was beyond his reach.

Wiser than his two friends, the Prince had left Breda for the home of his childhood at Dillenburg when he heard of Alva's approach. He did not go in any cowardly spirit, though there were enemies who accused him of deserting the cause in time of need, but because Philip had devised a new oath of allegiance which he required all the nobles to take.

This was a solemn promise to obey every order received from the King, whatever it might be, and William had steadfastly refused to comply, for, as he wrote to the Regent:

"The form of this new oath is somewhat strange and seems to imply that I either meditate excusing myself from loyal exertions in the King's service, or that I am to receive orders that I could not conscientiously execute, as I have also sworn to protect the privileges of the provinces. . . .

"Therefore I pray your Highness, send some gentlemen to me with proper papers of dismissal, to whom I may deliver my commission, assuring you at the same time that I will never fail in my service to his Majesty for the good of this land."

All reasonable commands the Prince was ready to obey, but even to please the King he would not act against his conscience.

Shortly afterward his preparations for departure were complete. His eldest daughter, Marie, was a

maid of honour to the Regent at Brussels, but her father withdrew her from the court to go with him. His son and heir, Philip William, was at the university of Louvain—in those days boys went to college almost as soon as they reached their teens—but after a visit home he was sent back there to finish his studies. It is difficult to see how the Prince thought it safe to allow this; it was a mistake for which he suffered very heavily in time to come.

Followed by many Netherlanders who were fleeing in terror at Alva's approach, the Prince, with his wife and family, started for quiet Dillenburg, where they arrived before Alva set foot in the Netherlands.

So it came about that the proud and conquering Duke was baulked of the chief of his victims. With Orange, the ringleader, still at liberty, Alva knew that the capture of Egmont and Horn lost half its importance.

He that only rules by terror
Doth grievous wrong.
ALFRED TENNYSON

CHAPTER XI: *Preparing for the Struggle*

GREY old Dillenburg Castle, on its green hill-top, did not belong to William, and he and his party took up their abode there as the guests of his brother John, who had inherited the family home on the death of Count William the Elder. It says much for the love and honour in which the eldest brother was held, and for the generous hospitality of those times, that the Prince and his large party made their headquarters at Dillenburg for the next four years, always welcome, always treated to the best the house afforded.

Good Count John never complained, though he had ample cause, for the castle, roomy as it was, was already crowded. John and his wife had several children, and Countess Juliana, with two or three of her daughters, still made Dillenburg her home; so did the younger brothers, Adolphus and Henry.

This large family would have lived under one roof happily enough, for the Nassaus, and William in particular, were noted for their deep and sympathetic affection for all their kin, if it had not been for the presence of the Prince's wife.

Poor misguided Anne, self-willed, violent-tempered, and married young into a foreign land and a strange religion, had not long remained "as happy as a queen." As time went on, in spite of her good husband and her children, she grew more and more discontented and passionate.

Before the Prince left the Netherlands she was incessantly grumbling because he allowed himself

to be bullied, as she said, by the Regent, but no sooner had William rebelled and quitted the country than she began sighing for the comforts of Breda, and complaining of the crowded household at Dillenburg.

Orange was a sad man in these days, for he had troubles enough to grieve his brave spirit. His country was in sore straits in the hands of the merciless Alva, he himself was in exile to avoid arrest and execution, his wife quarrelled with all he did, and ten months after his departure from the Netherlands Alva dealt him one of the cruellest blows he ever experienced.

It will be remembered that William's eldest son, the Count of Buren, had been left behind at Louvain University to study. The Duke of Alva resolved to take the boy prisoner, as he thought that by threatening harm to the son he might be able to influence the father.

Accordingly he sent a nobleman with a party of armed men to Louvain, where the messenger presented a letter to Philip William from the Duke. It was an invitation to him in the King's name to go to Spain, where he would be educated for Philip's service. The letter also explained that the party then in Louvain had been sent by the Duke to escort the honoured young guest to Spain.

The boy was only thirteen, and was dazzled by the enchanting tales which were told him of the life he would lead at Madrid. He thought no evil of the King or Alva, and fell into the trap quite eagerly. It is fair to say that the Duke did not injure him in any way, but sent him straight to Spain, where the King provided for him.

Preparing for the Struggle

It was over twenty years before the Count returned to his native land, and when at last he came back his father was dead, his brother Maurice, whom he had left a tiny baby, was ruling the Netherlands, and he himself was so changed by his Spanish education and life that no one would have recognized him as a Nassau.

A few weeks before seizing the young Count, Alva had summoned the Prince of Orange, with all his followers—Louis, Hoogstraaten, Brederode and the rest—to appear at Brussels within a certain time to answer for their share in the rebellions. Any who failed to present themselves were condemned to lose all their property and to be banished from the Netherlands for the rest of their lives.

William did not go, knowing well what his fate would be if he once placed himself in Alva's hands, and in this way he lost his large Flemish estates and, with them, much of his wealth.

Three months later he published a very long answer to the Duke's summons, in which he gave reasons for all his actions. What he had done, he said, was not done from personal ambition, but for the good of his country, which was being hopelessly crushed and injured by a tyrant government. He had been in favour of the Beggars' petitions, but had done his best to stop violence among them, at Antwerp and wherever else it had arisen. For the protection of the Netherlands he had wished the States-General to meet, as it had met often during the reign of Charles V.

This document is known as the "Justification," and it was practically a declaration of war. We

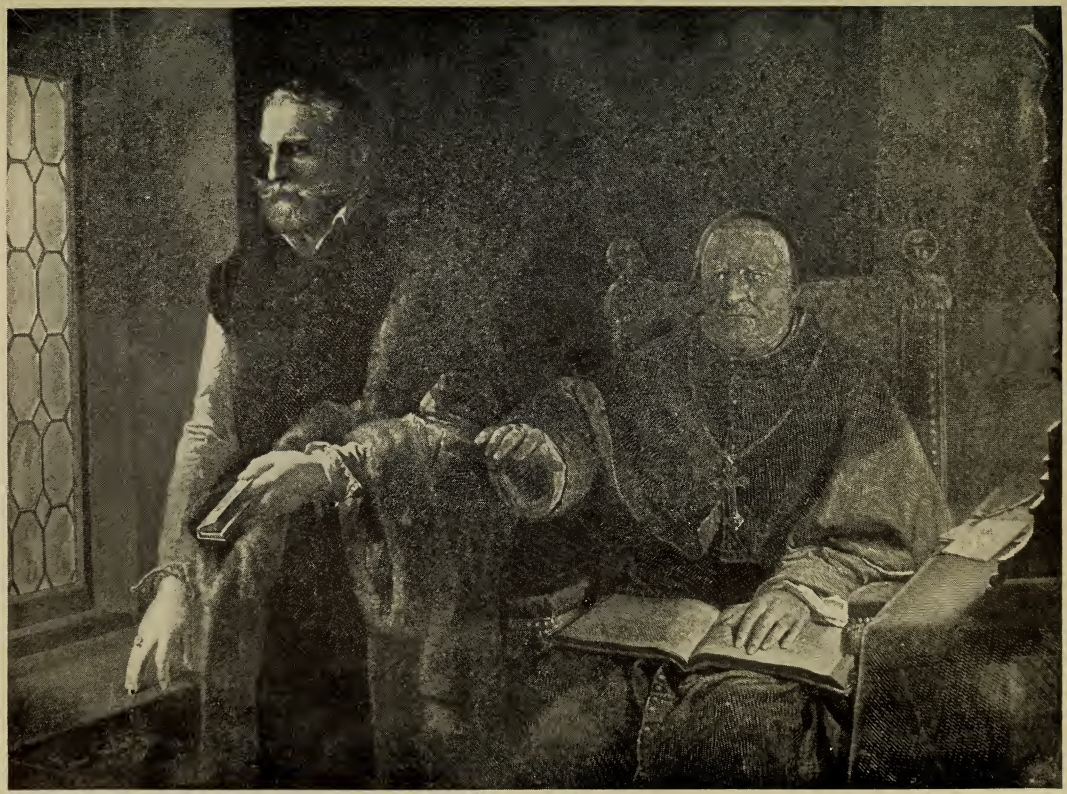
shall see now what Alva had been doing and how he replied to this letter of defiance.

The Duke had not wasted the year which had passed since his arrival in Brussels. One of his first deeds as Captain-General of the Netherlands was to set up the Council of Troubles, a body which soon gained the name of the Blood Council, owing to the number of lives it sacrificed. As it was composed entirely of Alva's followers, and was made the most powerful court of justice—or injustice—in the land, it will be seen what a terrible weapon it soon became.

Under the rule of this fearful council, the darkness of misery and death fell over the Netherlands. The scaffold, the hangman's axe and the stake overtook many who had not even committed the crime of heresy or treason. These victims were rich men, whose money went, after their death, to fill the empty treasury of the King of Spain. The most barbarous methods of slaughter were employed, and sometimes the lifeless bodies of men who died naturally during their imprisonment were beheaded or burned to satisfy the cruelty of the Inquisitors.

In his great book, *The Rise of the Dutch Republic*, Motley vividly paints the desolation of the land. He says:

"The whole country became a charnel-house; the death-bell tolled hourly in every village; not a family but was called to mourn for its dearest relatives. . . . The spirit of the nation, within a few months after the arrival of Alva, seemed hopelessly broken. The blood of its best and bravest had already stained the scaffold; the men to whom it had been accustomed to look for guidance were dead, in prison,



"THE LAST MOMENTS OF COUNT EGMONT"—*Page 80*

or in exile. . . . The scaffolds, the gallows, the funeral piles, which had been sufficient in ordinary times, furnished now an entirely inadequate machinery for the incessant executions."

Philip had actually gone so far as to condemn to death *every soul in the Netherlands!* Consequently no one was ever found innocent, and people were executed on all sorts of excuses. One lady lost her life because she had once hit an image of the Virgin with her slipper, and on other occasions batches of fifty or a hundred people would be condemned in one sentence.

There were so many prisoners that, though the Blood Council allowed no trial that was worthy of the name, the members often found it difficult to get through their work quickly enough. Once it happened that a man's name appeared on the list of the day's trials after he had been executed.

"What does it matter?" said Vargas, an inhuman brute, who was one of the councillors, "if he has died innocent, it will be all the better for him when he takes his trial in the other world."

Two of the "best and bravest" who fell early victims to the Blood Council were the Counts of Horn and Egmont. After being kept for nine months in prison, the two nobles were condemned to death at a mockery of a trial. Both met their end with calm courage in June, 1568, and it is said that the Spanish troops, and even the Duke of Alva himself, wept for the cruel death of two such brave men and gallant soldiers.

The deed made Alva's name more detestable than ever to the Netherlands, and William of Orange,

when the news came to him at Dillenburg, grieved sorely for the loss of his comrades; but their hard fate only strengthened his resolve never to rest until his country was free of the Spanish yoke.

In the next chapter we shall see how he came to grips with Alva.

CHAPTER XII: *The First Campaign*

THE Prince of Orange would have led an army against Alva long ere this, if it had not been for one great disadvantage which for many months he could not overcome. To engage troops takes a large sum of money, and since his estates had been confiscated William had very little. From being, a few years before, one of the richest men in the Netherlands, he now found that his income from his principality of Orange, and from one or two other sources, was not more than enough to support himself and his family.

While the Duke of Alva was slaying hundreds of Netherland men and women every week, William and Louis, in Germany, were straining every nerve to gather an army fit to encounter the picked Spanish troops. Louis visited one German prince after another, calling on them as Protestants and lovers of justice to help the poor, oppressed Flemish people; but one and all were afraid to oppose so mighty a general as Alva.

At last a certain amount of money was borrowed, given to him, or otherwise scraped together, and the Prince was able to put his brother in command of a body of German troops. Orange had sold his plate and jewels to furnish funds for this army, and Count John had generously helped in the same way. A plan was now made from which the leaders hoped great results, all the more so because they knew it would be a work of the greatest difficulty to raise money for a second attempt should the first fail.

The Prince's idea was that the Protestant forces should enter the Netherlands on three sides at once, so that Alva would not know which way to turn; then they would all unite to defeat him. Louis, with his German troops, was to go by way of Freisland, in the extreme north-east; a second army which Hoogstraaten had collected would enter the country on the eastern side, and a body of French Huguenots and Flemish exiles had promised to help the campaign by swooping down from the west. The Prince himself was to hold a small force in reserve at Cleves, on the German side of the border, ready to make a fourth attack if things went well.

The plan was carefully thought out, but, owing to Alva's splendid generalship it was not nearly so successful as William had hoped. The French expedition was cut to pieces by one of the Duke's officers, and Hoogstraaten's force, which had tried to seize the important border town of Roermonde, was driven back with very heavy losses by a second body of Spaniards.

Meanwhile dashing Count Louis had succeeded better. At a place called Dam, in the far north, his youngest brother Adolphus met him with a small body of cavalry. Large numbers of peasants, armed with scythes and pitchforks, thronged to Louis' standard, untrained and unused to war though they were.

Alva saw that quick action was needed, and lost no time in sending Count Aremberg to Friesland with an army of nearly two thousand five hundred men. At Arnhem he was met by Count Meghem with a smaller force, and farther north the two generals

were joined by a third body of soldiers under a commander called Braccamonte. He and Aremberg met Count Louis' rabble at Dam, where a skirmish took place, in which Louis was driven back to his entrenchments with a loss of twenty or thirty men.

Meghem, whose troops had mutinied at Arnhem, and who had been delayed in consequence, took no part in the engagement at Dam, but toward the end of the month marched northward to rejoin Count Aremberg. The Count came up with Louis and his army, who had taken possession of a strong position a few miles from Dam, near the monastery of Heiliger-Lee or "the Holy Lion."

Louis and Adolphus had had warning that the enemy was near, so by the time the Spanish forces arrived the patriot army was prepared for them.

The battle began at once, and, thanks to Louis' cleverness in choosing his position and the rashness of the Spanish leader, who attacked too soon, a victory was won for the patriots. Toward the end of the fight Aremberg and Adolphus, each at the head of a few devoted followers, met in hand-to-hand conflict. The Spanish commander slew the young Count of Nassau, and perished gallantly himself a few minutes later. Poor Aremberg! He atoned in some degree by a hero's death for the foolhardiness which had lost the battle for his side.

The victory was not so great a one as it seemed, for Louis was unable to follow it up. Groningen, the capital of Friesland, fell into Spanish hands, and Louis could not recapture it for lack of guns. What good he did was to cut to pieces an experienced Spanish army, thus proving both to his own side and

to Alva that the latter's troops were not invincible, as they had been thought to be.

Unhappily this advantage was more than balanced by the loss of brave young Count Adolphus, only twenty-eight years old, for whom his mother, sisters and brothers mourned deeply, and by the unjust deaths of Egmont and Horn, which were Alva's revenge, as it were, for his defeat.

The news of Louis' victory at Heiliger-Lee had aroused all the Duke of Alva's fury, and even numberless executions could not soothe him. Feeling that after this none of his generals could be relied upon, he marched northward himself with a magnificent army of fifteen thousand men.

Louis was at Jemmingen, near Groningen, with only two-thirds as many soldiers, all badly-equipped and rebellious. In the battle that followed the daring Count never had a chance of victory; he was as unfavourably placed as Aremberg had been at Heiliger-Lee. He fought with desperate bravery, but Alva and his well-trained followers wiped out the rabble army with very little difficulty, and when all was over Louis only just managed to save himself by swimming across the River Ems.

The deliberate cruelty of the Duke at this battle makes one shudder. He was resolved to teach the Netherlands a lesson that would have a lasting effect, and save him further trouble with these "men of butter." No mercy was shown to the defeated army, and for hours after the fighting was over the Spanish troops were busy killing every straggler or wounded man they could find.

Louis lost seven thousand men, while Alva wrote

to the King afterward that only *seven* of his own men had fallen. Probably this is a false calculation, but all historians agree that the Spanish death-roll could not have numbered more than eighty.

Alva marched triumphantly homeward, allowing his troops to kill and burn at every step of the way, so that the whole sky was red with the fires they had kindled. At the same time Count Louis and the few men who had escaped with him were making their weary way back through the fruitful German country to the man who had planned the expedition.

Though William was bitterly disappointed at the almost complete failure of his first attempt to free the Netherlands, neither his courage nor Louis' faltered for a moment.

"We must have patience and not lose heart," wrote the Prince, in an affectionate and encouraging letter to his defeated brother. "We must submit to the will of God and strive incessantly, as I have resolved to do, come what may. With God's help, I am determined to push onward. . . ."

Louis' letter to a friend in England showed the same hopeful spirit:

"Our army is partly dispersed and partly defeated, but our heart is as good as ever," were his words. "We hope soon, by the help of God, to have a better force than before to save the Church and the cause."

These were brave words from leaders who had just been crushingly defeated with the loss of all their men, and who saw those who had been inclined to help them turning their backs on so unequal a struggle. But then all the Nassaus were made of heroic stuff.

O, have you been in Brabant,
fighting for the states?
O, have you brought back anything
except your broken pates?
O, I have been in Brabant, myself
and all my mates.

We'll go no more to Brabant, un-
less our brains were addle,
We're coming home on foot, we
went there in the saddle;
For there's neither gold nor glory
got, in fighting for the states.

GERMAN SOLDIERS' BALLAD

CHAPTER XIII: *Utter Defeat*

BAFFLED and disappointed, but unbroken in spirit, William the Silent had no sooner recovered from the first shock of his brother's death and the defeat at Jemmingen than he set to work to gather a fresh army.

The Huguenots had been disheartened by the failure of their expedition, and the German princes refused to help, so Orange turned to the only other Protestant ruler, Queen Elizabeth of England, and besought her aid. He was not undertaking a rebellion, he said; all he wished to do was to defend the Reformed faith, "that the pure word of God might not be destroyed by the incredible cruelties of Alva." The King, still in Spain, had been misled by false advisers, and did not understand the terrible state of his Flemish provinces.

In reality Philip knew quite well how matters stood in the Netherlands, and the Prince was aware that he knew; but Orange and his followers were by no means strong enough yet to stand alone, and this plea that the King was kept in ignorance by his officers in the Low Countries was for many years a convenient shield for the Reformers' actions against the Spanish Government.

Queen Elizabeth had many difficulties of her own, and though much later in the struggle she gave generous help to the patriots, at this time she was unable to lend them aid. By dint of the greatest trouble and hard work, William succeeded in enrolling a second and larger army within a few weeks

after losing the first. When he entered the Netherlands he found Alva waiting for him with a body of troops, rather weaker in numbers, but well-trained and loyal, while his own men, chiefly German hired soldiers—mercenaries, as they were called—were discontented and very difficult to control.

Alva saw that if he could delay battle long enough these mutinous troops would desert the Prince and save him (Alva) the trouble of winning a victory. With the greatest skill he led William's army a long chase through Brabant, never coming to close quarters with the rebels, but cutting up small bodies of them whenever an opportunity occurred.

The result was exactly what he had expected. William was so short of money that before long he had not enough left to buy his troops food and equipments. The men were half-starved and being led about the country in pursuit of an enemy whom they never saw. Soon mutinies broke out all through the army, and the soldiers declared that they would go no farther without food, clothes and the pay that was owing to them.

By the end of that black year, 1568, William had been forced to disband his troops and take refuge in France. He had sold the last of his jewellery and plate to pay the soldiery, and never before had his prospects looked so dark. There was little Christmas joy among the Nassaus that year, and afterward William looked back to that Yuletide as the darkest time of his life.

"We may regard the Prince now as a dead man," Alva wrote boastfully to the King; "he has neither influence nor credit."

But Orange, though quiet for the moment, was even then planning fresh schemes for his country's deliverance. Even in this gloomy hour he never lost courage or doubted where his life-work lay.

For a while, however, he could do nothing, for not only had Alva's good generalship worsted him, but he had sore family troubles to occupy his attention. His wife had always hated her life at Dillenburg, although her relations showed her every kindness and bore patiently with her outrageous temper.

At last what little patience Anne possessed gave way completely, and she insisted on leaving Dillenburg and going to live by herself in Cologne, where she set up a large, expensive household. William wrote many kind letters begging her to come back, but she refused.

The last years of the poor Princess's life were very sad ones, for finally she went mad, and during the last two years of her life had to be kept closely imprisoned. She never recovered her mind, and at last died miserably, leaving three children, Anna, Maurice and Emilie, who were brought up at Dillenburg by their uncle, John.

Maurice grew up to be a fine soldier and a famous man, carrying on William's work after his father's death.

The four years which followed his second campaign were very dreary ones to the Prince. For the most part of this time he and Louis, with their youngest brother Henry, were in France, where they had thrown in their lot with the Huguenots.

They were always in straits for money. The Prince who, ten years ago, had been one of the

richest men through the length and breadth of the Netherlands, and who had lavished money on all sides as though he owned the never-empty purse of Fortunatus, was now reduced to the greatest poverty.

Once he had thrown a handsome gift into the bowl of every beggar in the streets who craved his charity; now he was so deeply in debt to his brothers and friends that he could hardly hope ever to pay them all back. The magnificently dressed young noble of a few years ago had become a shabbily clad soldier who must needs inquire anxiously what had happened to the trunk-hose which he had sent to be mended. His vast revenues, his plate, jewellery and fine raiment, all had been swallowed up in the service of his country.

Spies swarmed wherever the Prince might be, and letters were so often intercepted by these enemies that William and his brothers had to adopt a kind of secret code when writing on State matters.

At one time Orange called himself George Certain, and addressed Louis as Lambert Certain. A casual reader might have thought their letters the ordinary business correspondence of two merchants, but the few who were in the secret could read important plans behind the mercantile wording.

When the Prince wrote to an agent of his called Wesembeck, he disguised his meaning by using the names of metals to represent the provinces, and those of the old Greek gods for the different towns. If he mentioned Pollux, Wesembeck knew he meant Brill, while Triton stood for Rotterdam, and so on.

All the while that his terrible lack of money kept

the Prince inactive, news from the Netherlands grew more and more heartrending.

After seeing the utter failure of William's second campaign, the Duke of Alva had returned home to Brussels in high feather, exceedingly well pleased with himself and his soldiers. Indeed, he was so proud of his success that he actually determined to erect a monument to himself! The bronze of the cannon which he had captured at Jemmingen was melted down and remodelled into a hugh statue of Alva, which was placed with great pomp in the citadel at Antwerp. The boastful inscription upon it ran:

To

FERDINAND ALVAREZ DE TOLEDO
DUKE OF ALVA

Governor of the Netherlands under Philip II, for having extinguished sedition, chastised rebellion, restored religion, secured justice, established peace; to the King's most faithful minister

THIS MONUMENT IS ERECTED

Persecution went on unceasingly, and new instructions, ever more severe, were issued to the governors and magistrates. A man might not even die in peace, for an officer of the Inquisition must be present to see that he received the Roman Catholic sacrament before he passed away. If any poor Protestant contrived to die in his own faith his estates were forfeited to the crown, and his dead body was executed.

King Philip II was always in money difficulties, and about this time his viceroy in the Netherlands found that funds were not coming into his coffers nearly as fast as they were spent, and that he must

find some additional means of raising money. To do this he instituted the taxes known as the hundredth, twentieth and tenth pennies.

The hundredth penny, or the one per cent. tax, as it was sometimes called, meant that all men who possessed any property, such as houses or land, must pay one hundredth part of its value to the State. This tax had only to be paid once, and the Duke commanded that it should be collected without delay.

The tax of the twentieth penny meant that every time any land was sold, five per cent., or a twentieth part of its value, was claimed by the Government.

The last tax, that of the tenth penny, was so monstrous that no man knowing anything of money affairs could have thought it possible to collect it. It was nothing less than a duty of ten per cent. on *every article bought or sold.*

The Netherlanders might have submitted to the first two taxes, though they were bound to cripple trade sorely, but the tenth penny was too great an injustice to be borne, and would have completed the ruin of the oppressed provinces. It meant that if a man bought a loaf of bread, costing, let us say, fivepence, he must pay a halfpenny to the Duke of Alva.

When we think how many loaves a family would eat in a week, and remember that meat, wine, clothing, furniture—in fact, *everything*—were to be taxed in the same proportion, it is easy to see that the traders would soon lose all their profit and the whole country be reduced to beggary.

The olde sea wall (he cried) is downe,
The rising tide comes on apace,
And boats adrift in yonder towne
Go sailing uppe the market-place.
JEAN INGELOW

CHAPTER XIV: *The Darkest Hour*

THE storm of fear and protest which swept all through the Netherlands when the new taxes were announced would have made any man quail who had less confidence in himself than the Duke of Alva. These abominable taxes roused every one; falling as they did on all alike, they were as unjust to the Roman Catholics as to the Protestants.

More than that, they were contrary to all Netherland laws, for the Joyous Entry of Brabant and the charters of the other provinces expressly said that money could only be raised by the Government with the consent of all the estates.

Petitions and protests from all quarters poured in upon the Duke. The hundredth penny was agreed to, but the other two taxes infuriated the Netherlanders. Alva, however, was a man of iron determination, and by degrees he forced the provinces to yield, the more easily as they hardly believed that he would actually dare to collect the taxes. At last only Utrecht, both province and city, held out. They offered a large sum of money, but refused to submit to these perpetual taxes.

The Duke made them pay dearly for their obstinacy. He sent troops to take possession of Utrecht, declared both province and city guilty of high trea-

son, and deprived them of all their privileges. Then, and not till then, Alva felt sure of his tenth and twentieth pennies, and in the summer of 1569 he wrote cheerfully to the King that the battle of the taxes was won.

He was wrong, for when he tried to collect the duties the provinces put every possible hindrance in his way. The utmost he could do was to make an agreement with the estates that they should pay a large fixed sum annually for the next two years. At the end of that time the taxes would be discussed again.

This arrangement was a sad blow to the Duke. The King had never been greatly pleased with the scheme, fearing its effect on the trade of the Netherlands, and when it failed Alva knew that he had fallen in the royal favour.

He was growing old, his health was bad, and he was anxious to resign his position. Even he felt uncomfortable under the weight of hatred he had created against himself. Never had the Low Countries detested any man so much; the mere mention of his name was enough to throw a Netherlander into fury.

All these circumstances showed Philip that it was time Alva's successor was appointed. While considering who was best fitted to fill the post, the King brutally murdered Baron Montigny, whom Orange had sent to Spain as an envoy years before, and who had been imprisoned there ever since at his Spanish Majesty's pleasure. The Baron was a brother of the unfortunate Count Egmont.

The unhappy Netherlanders had not yet come to the end of their troubles. They had reached that darkest hour of all which comes before the dawn,

and both man and nature seemed united against them. Not long before Christmas, in the year 1570, a terrific gale drove the sea landward and caused the dykes along the coast of Holland to break in every direction.

Eastward rushed the foaming waters, flooding mile after mile of country, till towns far inland had become seaports, and the gale drove fishing vessels deep over ruined gardens and meadows.

The northern province of Friesland suffered most of all, but throughout the Netherlands the loss of life and property almost baffled counting. One hundred thousand people perished, and many more were only saved with great difficulty.

The Seigneur de Billy, a noble who had previously been hated for his Spanish blood, earned undying gratitude in Friesland by his bravery in the work of rescue, for he and his troops went out in boats and saved many lives.

While the Prince of Orange was watching the march of events with horror from his retreat in France, one of his followers in the Netherlands made a bold attempt against the Spaniards. On the isle of Bommel, which is not a true island, but a narrow strip of land between the mouths of the Meuse and Waal rivers, stood Lowenstein Castle. As it was in an important position, the Spaniards had left a garrison, though a small one, there.

One wild December evening, four grey-robed and grey-cowled monks knocked at the castle gate and requested shelter for the night. They were taken to the commandant, Tisnacq, who was seated by a blazing fire talking to his wife.

"Does your Excellency hold this castle for the Prince of Orange or for the Duke of Alva?" asked the foremost monk as he came towards the fire.

"Down with your Prince of Orange! I recognize no liege save Philip, King of Spain," answered Tisnacq contemptuously.

Without a word the monk, who was really a drover named Herman de Ruyter and a devoted follower of Orange, drew a pistol from under his robe and shot the commandant dead before the eyes of his horrified wife. At the same time the other three men produced weapons which had been concealed in the folds of their monkish dress, and, few though they were, overcame the small, panic-stricken garrison.

The next morning they opened the gates to twenty-five comrades who had been awaiting the success of their stratagem from the outside, and did what they could to fortify the place. They expected to be joined almost at once by a larger band of men, but floods along the road delayed the arrival of this reinforcement.

While the new garrison still consisted of fewer than thirty men, the Spaniards, always prompt in warfare, sent a large body of soldiers to recapture the castle. In the ordinary way this would have been a difficult task, for Lowenstein was strongly fortified, and was protected from attack on three sides by water. Owing, however, to the small numbers of the besieged, the Spaniards gained a quick victory.

Within two days they were again masters of the place, and de Ruyter and his friends, after desperate fighting, all perished—some on the scaffold, some by

the hangman's rope, and de Ruyter in an explosion of a mine which he himself had laid, rather than fall into the enemy's hands.

Though William the Silent had had no knowledge of de Ruyter's plans, and would not have approved of his treachery if he had, it was one more blow to the cause he held so dear, and the news, when it came, saddened him accordingly.

Wherever the Prince went grim failure seemed to dog him. He and his two younger brothers had thrown in their lot with the French Huguenots, who at this time were going through almost as deep trials as their fellow-believers in the Netherlands.

In 1569 Louis and Adolphus of Nassau took part in the disastrous battle of Jarnac, which resulted in utter defeat for the Protestants and in the death of their leader, the Prince of Condé. Later followed the battle of Moncontour. William had gone perilously back to Germany by the time it was fought, but Louis bore himself so bravely that he was the hero of the day.

A little later peace was made with the French King, who, to occupy his soldiers and indulge his jealousy of Philip, promised to send an army to the relief of the Netherlands, and with high hopes William, from an obscure retreat in Germany, renewed his noble efforts for the salvation of his country. At last success seemed to be within his grasp.

Joining a corsair's crew,
O'er the dark sea I flew
With the marauders.
Wild was the life we led;
Many the souls that sped,
Many the hearts that bled,
By our stern orders.

HENRY W. LONGFELLOW

CHAPTER XV: *The Beggars of the Sea*

THOUGH, during his years of exile, the Prince of Orange had found it impossible to help the Netherlands by land, he had not been quite so powerless on the sea. He was an independent sovereign in Orange, though only a noble in Flanders, and as a sovereign he claimed the right to establish a fleet of his own.

He had no sooner come to blows with Alva than he began to issue what were called letters of marque to a number of Netherland vessels, authorizing them to cruise the high seas and attack any ships they might meet which belonged to the enemy. The Prince granted the letters in all good faith, but, sad to say, the powers he gave were shamefully misused, and soon the Beggars of the Sea, as the crews of these vessels called themselves, were as much feared along the coast as Alva himself was on land.

Many of the ships were commanded by men who cared very little for the cause which William had so deeply at heart. What they and their desperate crews wanted was to make their fortunes, and numbers of them were no better than common pirates. They attacked any ships which promised rich plunder, whether they flew the flag of Spain or not.

By the beginning of 1570 their conduct had become so disgraceful that William was forced to interfere. He recalled the admiral, Dolhain, appointed the Count de la Marck in his stead, and ordered that rules of good conduct which were almost forgotten at present should in future be strictly obeyed.

It was all very well for the Prince to issue commands, but as he was not on board to see that they were carried out things went on very much as before. De la Marck, a desperate, ferocious man, who always wore the Beggars' costume, soon proved himself to be no better than Dolhain. He was the terror of the whole coast, for he had sworn not to cut his beard until Egmont's death was avenged, and no vessels or harbours were safe from his attacks.

The power of the Beggars of the Sea was strengthened by Queen Elizabeth of England, who, though at times she turned against them with dangerous suddenness, as a rule was their good friend, and allowed them to seek harbourage, volunteers and supplies at the English ports.

The year 1572 was destined to be one of change, excitement and unexpected events. The first of these events took place in the early spring, when a deed was done by the Beggars of the Sea which went some way towards wiping out the memory of their past offences.

Queen Elizabeth was a cautious monarch, with a most difficult part to play in European politics. She was sometimes Philip's friend, sometimes his foe, according as she thought he could help or injure England. More than two years before she had quarrelled violently with Alva, and thereupon showed great kindness to his arch-enemies, the Beggars. But early in 1572 the Queen and Alva patched up their disagreement, and consequently Elizabeth felt that she could no longer encourage the rebel rovers.

Orders went forth that no subject of hers might

supply de la Marck and his followers with food of any kind, so, to avoid starvation, the pirate fleet was forced to leave the shores of England. Twenty-four vessels strong, the Beggars of the Sea determined to relieve their hunger by a raid on the northern Dutch coasts. A storm prevented their reaching Enkhuizen, on the Zuider Zee, as they had intended, and on the first day of April they made a sudden appearance in the harbour at Brill, a seaport at the mouth of the River Meuse.

Their approach threw the little town into a panic of fear. While the terrified inhabitants made their preparations for defence or escape, as each deemed best, a stout-hearted ferryman named Peter Koppelstock rowed out to the fleet to investigate. Koppelstock secretly favoured Orange's cause, so when he went back to Brill and the townsfolk crowded round him to ask if the Sea Beggars were strong in numbers, he answered that the ships carried about five thousand men, who demanded the keys of the town.

It was quite true that the starving pirates wished to gain possession of Brill, which was a well-walled and protected town. What was not true was the ferryman's reply about the strength of the Beggars. If the burghers had known that their enemy was not more than three or four hundred strong they would have defended the town, but Peter Koppelstock's lying answer made them think that resistance would be useless.

Accordingly they opened the gates with the best grace they could muster. The Beggars of the Sea came in, and they now stained their cause by plundering everything of value in the town and by

killing all the priests and monks who fell into their hands. In spite of this cruelty, their entrance into Brill laid the foundation stone of the Dutch Republic, for, excepting Louis of Nassau's short-lived victory at Heiliger-Lee, it was the first success achieved by the patriots and the first check to Spanish tyranny.

All over the country, as the news flew from village to village and province to province, the people were roused to fresh energy. New hope flowed warmly through their veins, that had been long frozen by despair, and nothing they could do was sufficient to express their delight.

Alva, old, ill, and only waiting the arrival of his successor to retire from what he considered "so ungrateful a land," did not at first understand the importance of the Beggars' capture. He did not realize how immensely useful a Netherland seaport would be to them.

"It is nothing," he said wearily when the news was brought him, but very soon his indifference changed to rage.

It did not improve his temper to know that all over the country people were repeating gleefully a rhyme which some quick-witted person had invented. *Brill* is the Flemish word for spectacles, besides being the name of the port, and the couplet ran something like this:—

> In 1572, on April Fool's Day,
> Duke Alva's spectacles were stolen away.

However, the Spanish viceroy was too good a soldier to waste much time in ill-temper; he ordered

Count Bossu, who had been Stadtholder in Holland and Zeeland since the Prince of Orange resigned those offices, to recapture Brill without delay.

Bossu's force was much more numerous than that of the Beggars in the town, but the patriots flooded the surrounding country by opening the dykes, and then completely routed the alarmed invaders by slipping out to sea and setting fire to the Spanish ships.

While the foe was sadly retreating by water, Admiral de la Marck called all the inhabitants of Brill together, and made them swear that henceforth they would be loyal to their rightful Stadtholder, the Prince of Orange.

And now it seemed that fortune stood at last upon the side of William the Silent, for the whole country rose on a sudden to aid him in the glorious cause of freedom.

Rotterdam, which had declared for the Prince immediately after the victory at Brill, fell into the hands of Bossu by a treacherous trick on his homeward way, and was sacked with horrible cruelties; but in many other places the patriots were successful.

Flushing, one of the most important ports on the whole Flemish coast, expelled the weak Spanish garrison in the place. As their numbers were small they sent to de la Marck for aid, and the Admiral willingly allowed his daring helper, Treslong, to lead a party of men to support them. They hanged Alva's famous engineer, an Italian named Pacheco, who happened to be in the town.

The example set by Brill and Flushing was followed by many other places, and the Prince thanked

God that at last his just and noble cause was making such progress. Town after town, in Holland, Zeeland, Guelderland, Overyssel, Utrecht and Friesland, raised the standard of the house of Orange. In the name of the distant King, William re-established himself in his position of Stadtholder of Holland and Zeeland.

Meanwhile Count Louis the bold had not been idle. From France he made a dash into Hainault, where he captured the important border fortress of Mons. His speech to the citizens shows us that the Nassaus had not taken up arms against their sovereign, King Philip, but only against Alva and tyranny. If the King would grant them liberty of conscience, they were quite willing to remain under the dominion of Spain.

"For," said Louis to the townsfolk of Mons, "I protest that I am no rebel to the King; I prove it by asking no new oaths from any man. . . . You will ask why I am in Mons at the head of an armed force; are any of you ignorant of Alva's cruelties? The overthrow of this tyrant is as much in the interest of the King as of the people, therefore there is nothing in my present conduct inconsistent with fidelity to his Majesty. Against Alva alone have I taken up arms; 'tis to protect you against his fury that I am here."

The time had not yet come when William could openly declare war against the King, who, he knew, was as much to blame as the Duke of Alva; for the moment, therefore, the servant must bear the sins of his master, as well as his own—in this case, truly a heavy load!

Have ye served us for a hundred years
And yet ye know not why?
We brook no doubt of our mastery,
We rule until we die.
HENRY NEWBOLT

CHAPTER XVI: *The Year* 1572

AND now success came to William the Silent as rapidly as failure had previously done. Town after town threw off the Spanish yoke, and the Beggars of the Sea, leaving robbery and persecution behind them, turned their strength to good purpose in the cause of national liberty.

Their crowning success occurred in June, when the Duke of Medina Cœli arrived off the Flemish coast with a large fleet and two thousand soldiers under the command of Julian Romero. The Duke was bringing reinforcements for Alva, but, unfortunately for himself and his men, he fell in with the Water Beggars, who destroyed or routed half his force and captured much valuable treasure.

Alva, who was at his wits' end for money, and who had been counting on the Spanish gold which the fleet was bringing, found himself for the moment almost powerless. The two years' grace which had postponed the struggle over the Tenth Penny had more than passed, but in his penniless and defeated condition the Duke had not strength enough to enforce the tax. To the people's joy he was obliged to abolish it, in return for a fixed yearly sum to be paid by the Estates.

Meanwhile the Prince of Orange was not idle, though he had not actually taken part in any of the fighting. He summoned a meeting of the Estates

at Dordrecht, at which the representatives declared themselves still loyal to the King, but accepted Orange as his lieutenant in the Netherlands instead of Alva.

The Prince asked them for money, without which he could do nothing. He had collected an army of over twenty thousand men, mostly German mercenaries, but could not take the field unless he were able to guarantee his troops pay for three months. Before the congress met he had written eloquent letters to the chief cities, entreating them to remember the great cause to which he had dedicated his life.

"Let not a sum of gold be so dear to you that for its sake you will sacrifice your lives, your wives, your children and all your decendants, to the latest generations," he wrote on one occasion, "that you will bring sin and shame upon yourselves, and destruction upon us who have so heartily striven to assist you. Think . . . what a bloody yoke ye will impose for ever upon yourselves and your children . . . if you now prevent us from taking the field with the troops which we have enlisted."

William's passionate letters, and the eloquence of his friend, Lord St Aldegonde, had such an effect upon those who read them that the representatives assembled at Dordrecht determined to give the Prince cordial help in the struggle.

Here, so that you may understand the position of affairs better, I will interrupt my narrative to give a few particulars about the Netherland form of government

The States-General consisted of the nobles sitting

together with deputies from all the important towns in the seventeen provinces. They could be summoned at the will of the sovereign.

The meeting at Dordrecht in 1572 was, however, far from being an ordinary one. The congress had been summoned by the Prince of Orange, not by the King, and, as a very large portion of the country was still in the hands of Spain, the only deputies present in the little Dutch town were those who represented the cities of a single province—Holland.

Holland was the Prince's own corner of the country, and had been and always was, the first in defying Spain. Brill, Rotterdam, Dordrecht itself, and most of the places where fighting had occurred, were in this one ocean-washed, water-logged little province of Holland. Of its six great cities Amsterdam alone was not represented at Dordrecht, for this city was still under Alva's control. On the other hand, several smaller towns, which usually had no deputies, had been invited to send them now.

When the congress met, it gave William almost more than he had dared to hope. He was recognized as Stadtholder, though he had resigned this office some years previously, and arrangements were come to regarding the carrying on of the war which made William practically the sovereign of his own part of the country.

It was further agreed that both Protestants and Roman Catholics should be allowed to worship in their own way—a great change from Alva's fierce intolerance.

Nor was money lacking. The Estates agreed to provide the sum needed for the army, and promised

more funds as they were required. The men who had indignantly refused to pay Alva's Tenth Penny opened their coffers wide for the Prince of Orange.

With plenty of money and the confidence of Holland to support him, the Prince set forth again undaunted. In June, while Count Louis was being closely besieged in Mons, the town he had so lately taken from them, William led his army into action. He first captured Roermonde, a city near the German border, where his troops—without his consent, of course—followed the brutal example of their foes, and put many monks and priests to death. The Prince was very angry, and issued a proclamation threatening with death any soldiers who were convicted of such cruelties.

After being delayed a month in Roermonde, because the expected funds from the Estates were long in coming, the Prince crossed the river Meuse in August, and advanced by way of Mechlin, Louvain and Brussels. The people welcomed him wherever he went, except in Brussels, the Spanish headquarters, and put themselves under his command.

Admiral Coligny had promised to join Orange with an army of twelve thousand French Protestants, and if this meeting had taken place there is every probability that the united forces would have crushed Alva's troops and brought the war to a speedy end.

Most unfortunately for the Prince, an act of the blackest treachery from outside in a few hours shattered his hopes more completely than ever before. This event was the horrible Massacre of Saint

Bartholomew in France, when, by order of King Charles IX, many thousands of Huguenots were murdered, and the Protestant party was practically wiped out.

The happenings which led to the massacre were these. The French King had for a long time sat on a throne made insecure by the constant quarrels of the Catholics and the Huguenots. He was like a boy steadying a see-saw from the middle, and casting his weight on the weaker side to keep the rocking even. As the fortunes of each side changed, so did Charles's support, for he always threw the balance of his help on to the weaker side, so that he might avoid being overwhelmed by the stronger.

In the summer of 1572 the Huguenots had, for the moment, the upper hand, and the weak young King, urged by his wicked mother, Catherine of Medici, resolved to rid himself of their dangerous supremacy in one bold stroke. A huge plot was arranged with the Catholics, and on August 24th, St Bartholomew's Day, when the clocks of Paris chimed the hour of midnight, Catholics rushed out from palace, house and hovel, and hounded the Protestants to death through the quiet streets of Paris.

The massacre lasted two days, not only in the capital but in many other parts of France, and thousands of Huguenots fell in that ghastly hunt to the death. Scarcely a Protestant remained alive.

Brave Admiral Coligny was one of the first victims, and while the Prince of Orange awaited him in Flanders his bloody corpse lay unburied in Paris. The whole of Protestant Europe stood aghast at the news, and while Queen Elizabeth decked herself

in mourning robes the Pope attended a thanksgiving service in Rome.

To the Nassaus the disaster was overwhelming. Apart from the loss of warm personal friends among the murdered leaders, the non-appearance of the French army on which he had counted ruined the whole of William's plans. When the news reached Mons, Count Louis was so horrified and overcome with grief that he fell violently ill and did not recover for many weeks.

The Prince was nearly heart-broken, as once again he saw his chance of success snatched away when all had promised so well. He wrote to Count John in the deepest despair.

"There is no need to tell you what a fearful blow this has been to us. Our one hope of human aid was in France. By all earthly calculations we should have been to-day masters of Alva, and have had him at our mercy. It cannot be told how this has ruined and thrown me back, for I trusted to the twelve thousand arquebusiers that the Admiral promised me."

William had only too good cause for despair. He bravely pressed on to Mons to relieve his brother, taking two or three towns on the way. Alva was there, in charge of the besieging army and in a dangerous position, for he had emptied even Brussels of its garrison to assist in the capture of Mons.

If William had been as reckless a soldier as Louis, all might yet have been well, for in one bold move it would have been possible to raise the siege and, with the help of the imprisoned soldiers, crush the Spanish army. But William had no dash in his character,

"THE DOG AWAKENED THE PRINCE IN THE NICK OF TIME"
—*Page 112*

and on this occasion his prudence and care stood him in bad stead.

One calm September night he was in camp near Mons, with the enemy half a league away. Julian Romero, one of the boldest of Alva's officers, chose six hundred picked soldiers to make a night attack on the sleeping German camp. The men, who wore white shirts over their armour, that they might recognise one another in the dark, crept as softly as shadows through the summer night, and surprised the hostile army wrapped in deep slumber.

Then followed a horrible butchery, when hundreds of men were killed in their sleep, or silenced before they were sufficiently awake to distinguish friend from foe. Finally the Spaniards fired the camp and many more unfortunates were burnt to death.

William the Silent was in terrible danger, for Romero and some of his followers made straight for his tent. If it had not been for the devotion of a little spaniel that always slept at his feet, the noble-hearted Prince would have shared the fate of his soldiers.

The dog was roused by the sound of footsteps, and by barking and licking his master's face, awakened the Prince in the nick of time. He had barely a minute to spring upon a horse that stood near, ready saddled, and gallop away, before Romero and his men reached the tent, and killed several secretaries whom they found there.

I do not know if the brave little dog was saved—I fear not; but he lives in the memory of the Prince's people, for on the tomb of Orange at Delft lies a little stone spaniel sleeping at his feet.

The tumult of each sacked and
burning village,
The shout that every prayer
for mercy drowns;
The soldiers' revel in the midst
of pillage;
The wail of famine in be-
leaguered towns.

HENRY W. LONGFELLOW

CHAPTER XVII: '*Mid Siege and Massacre*

AFTER the rout and disbandment of William's army Louis' last hope of relief was gone, and there was nothing left but to surrender Mons on as honourable terms as possible. To his great surprise Alva, who, ferocious as he was, had been shocked by the wholesale French massacre, was sufficiently softened to treat his brave foe with very unusual leniency.

He allowed Louis and his troops to pass out of Mons unharmed, and with strange Spanish courtesy —compared with his usual conduct—provided the Count with an escort to Roermonde. It was only after the troops had left that he sacked the town with his ordinary cruelty. Louis, who was still seriously ill, was taken in a litter by slow stages home to Dillenburg, where his mother's loving care presently restored him to health.

Mons fell late in September, and about the same time William made up his mind to settle down either in Holland or Zeeland. Here he would be in the centre of the Protestant country, and far better able to direct matters than from distant Germany. Even as early as this he saw plainly that these two northern provinces were the backbone of the country; in the south there was more Catholicism, more jealousy and less enthusiasm.

Holland received the Prince with the warmest of welcomes, though he came as a defeated general, not, as they had hoped, as a conqueror. He had won the affectionate title of "Father of his Country,"

and in this chequered year the *Wilhelmuslied*, or Song of William, was written, probably by his close friend, Lord St Aldegonde. The first verse, translated, runs:—

Wilhelmus of Nassau,
I am of German line,
And faithful to the Fatherland
Bide I, till death be mine.
As sov'reign Prince of Orange
I am undaunted, free;
His Majesty of Spain,
I've honoured loyally.

There are many more verses which tell the story of the struggle for freedom, and to this day the *Wilhelmuslied* is the national song of Holland.

By the end of the year the Prince had settled his family in a roomy house in Delft. This quiet little Dutch town was his home for the rest of his life, though he spent much of his time in camp or on the march.

While William was transferring his household from Dillenburg to Delft, Alva had not been idle. From Mons he passed on to Mechlin, where the same horrible scenes took place. One of Philip's agents wrote to the King that the soldiers had not left "a nail in the walls," and Alva told Philip that God had ordained this chastisement, which, however, had not been sufficiently severe!

By these dreadful means the Duke cowed the provinces of Brabant and Flanders into accepting once more the Spanish rule. But the stout heart of Holland was still untamed, and a patriot army laid siege to Tergoes, on the island of South Beveland.

It was an important place, because it was the key to the possession of other towns, and the Spaniards were resolved to raise the siege at all costs.

South Beveland was situated at the mouth of the Scheld, and lay close to the mainland. In fact, until fifty years previously, when a great storm broke down the dykes and flooded the coast, it had not been an island at all. The tract of country which separated it from the rest of Flanders had lain under water ever since, and was known as the "Verdronken Land" or "Drowned Land."

Patriot forces prevented the Spaniards from bringing help to Tergoes either by land or sea, so the desperate plan occurred to them of wading through the "Drowned Land" to the city. The passage was nowhere less than four feet deep, and it was nearly ten miles from the mainland to the island; yet, astonishing as it may seem, three thousand gallant soldiers actually performed the journey by night.

The men were led by a bold Spanish officer named Mondragon. On a dark October night they started on their perilous journey through the water, each man carrying on his head provisions for the starving garrison inside Tergoes.

The passage must be accomplished in six hours, or the rising tide would drown them; the slime under the water gave an uncertain foothold and in several places the channel was too deep to be crossed except by swimming.

In the whole course of a war which teemed with heroic deeds and still more heroic sufferings, there is no more splendid and amazing feat than this night march of Mondragon's. In spite of the darkness,

the distance, the cold waters reaching often to their necks, before day dawned the gallant band had reached the island; in the long ten miles of alternate wading and swimming only nine men out of the three thousand had lost their lives.

After a short rest they marched on towards Tergoes, at the other end of the island, and when the news sped before them that a Spanish army had arisen, as it seemed, out of the sea itself, panic fell upon the patriot army. Such an unheard-of thing terrified the superstitious minds of the sixteenth century, and the besiegers fled hurriedly to their ships. Spanish daring had saved Tergoes for King Philip.

While Mondragon was proving what deeds his troops could perform, the Duke of Alva and his son were making a triumphal progress northwards. Every city that they reduced was punished for its disobedience as Mons and Mechlin had been. In Zutphen scarcely a man was left alive, while Naarden, a small town on the Zuider Zee, was burnt to the ground and most of its inhabitants were horribly slaughtered.

Alva, full of satisfaction, wrote to the King that "they had cut the throats of the burghers and all the garrison, and they had not left a mother's son alive"; while a Spanish historian shares his strange belief that he was serving God by these barbarities.

"The sack of Naarden," wrote Mendoza in his history, "was a chastisement which must be believed to have taken place by express permission of a Divine Providence; a punishment for having been the first of the Holland towns in which heresy built its nest."

The chief event of that winter (1572–73) was the

long siege of Haarlem. William of Orange met the Estates there during the autumn, and afterwards remained in the neighbourhood, for he expected that Alva, who was most anxious to recover Holland, would try to regain possession of the important city of Haarlem.

He was right. After a skirmish on the ice of Haarlem Lake near by, when a body of Spaniards on skates tried unsuccessfully to capture a fleet of Dutch vessels which was frozen up, Alva invested the city shortly before Christmas.

The Haarlemers had hearts of oak in their breasts, but unfortunately the place was not well fortified against attack. Assault followed assault, and Don Frederic, Alva's son, who was in charge of the besieging army, found that Haarlem would not fall in a week, as he had at first believed.

He soon saw that though the city could not be carried by assault it could be starved into submission, and by the beginning of February he was playing a waiting game.

Famine stared the citizens in the face, and more and more eagerly they watched for help from outside, where the Prince was doing his utmost to bring relief. But as usual he was sadly handicapped by lack of men and money. He made several attempts to raise the siege, but all failed.

Inside the city the half-starved burghers held out and repelled Spanish attacks with unwavering courage. Alva himself, as ready to praise his foes as his friends, admitted that "never was a place defended with such skill and bravery as Haarlem."

The end began in May, when the Prince's fleet on

Haarlem Lake was utterly defeated by the Spaniards. In the city people were dying daily of starvation, and nettles and weeds were eagerly eaten by the survivors. Haarlem surrendered in July, after a siege which had lasted for seven months.

Alva's fury at the time it had taken to fall was expressed in a ghastly slaughter of two thousand three hundred of the gallant, famished inhabitants. In seven months Haarlem lost, by siege or massacre, over five thousand of her bravest and best.

CHAPTER XVIII: *The Going of Alva*

FROM the ruins of Haarlem Alva took his army northward to Alkmaar, a little town situated among the lakes and canals of North Holland. Not far away was the village of Egmont, with the rugged walls of Egmont Castle, which had been the home of the ill-fated Count, rising in its midst.

Orange sent eight hundred soldiers to garrison Alkmaar, and hardly had they taken up their quarters within the walls when the Spanish army arrived, burned Egmont village to ashes and invested Alkmaar so closely that, as Alva expressed it, "it was impossible for a sparrow to enter or go out of the city."

The Duke wrote to Philip that as gentleness (by which he meant his treatment of Haarlem) had proved useless, he should try the effect of severity on Alkmaar. He was determined, he said, not to leave a soul alive in the place.

The contest was a terribly unequal one, for the besieged had only their small garrison and thirteen hundred untrained burghers to oppose against a large and experienced Spanish army numbering sixteen thousand men. The citizens of Alkmaar fought like heroes, however, side by side with the military, and looked to the Father of their Country to help them from without.

Their chief hope lay in the friendly sea, which, though at ordinary times the Hollanders' worst foe, fought with them against the might of Spain. Alkmaar was only a few miles from the coast, and

by opening the dykes and flooding the intervening country the town could be saved.

This was hard for the farmers, whose crops would be entirely spoilt by the water, but after a seven weeks' siege the plan was adopted. The Spaniards, finding their camp flooded by the rising waters, were forced to raise the siege and beat a hurried retreat. For the patriots it was a great victory, when for the first time a veteran Spanish army, led by an experienced general, had to retire from the field discomfited.

But the Prince's feats during this time were not warlike ones only; in other directions he achieved much during the second half of 1573. Through Louis he was in treaty with the French court for help in the war, though it was difficult for the Nassaus to look upon Charles IX as a friend since the massacre of the year before.

With Louis away, William's toils were much increased. He had the affairs of a whole nation on his shoulders, a terribly unequal warfare to carry on as well, and no one to look to but himself. The Father of his Country often felt more alone than the most friendless beggar in the streets, for, though he had mother, brothers, sisters and children, all were either too distant or too young to be in any sense a support to him in his life-work.

"Our affairs are in pretty good condition in Holland and Zeeland, if I only had some aid," he wrote. "'Tis impossible for me to support alone so many labours, and the weight of such great affairs as come upon me hourly—financial, political, military. I have no one to help me, not a single man,

wherefore I leave you to suppose in what trouble I find myself."

In the midst of his other work Orange yet made time to write two stirring appeals on behalf of his country. The "Address" was sent to the States-General, which had been summoned by Alva and was sitting at Brussels, and called on the nation to resist Philip's tyranny, pointing out what the valiant little province of Holland had already accomplished.

The "Epistle" was written almost at the same time and was addressed to Philip in the names of the Prince of Orange and the Estates of Holland and Zeeland. It rehearsed the dreadful condition to which Spanish injustice had brought the Netherlands, and declared that for this reason only had the people taken up arms. It was such a bold, passionate defence as none but Orange could write, but it had no effect on the King.

Alva suffered one more check to add misery to his unhappy position. A few days after Alkmaar was saved, Count Bossu, who was in command of a Spanish fleet in the Zuider Zee, was defeated and taken prisoner by a somewhat smaller Dutch force under Admiral Dirkzoon.

And now Alva's reign of intolerance and cruelty was drawing to a close. The Duke was old and disgraced, for of late his cunning in warfare had deserted him. He had long ago quarrelled with his council, and Viglius the Frisian scholar, who had once been his devoted slave, now openly hated him. Throughout the length and breadth of the Netherlands his name was regarded with a loathing and horror

that had probably never been equalled either before or since.

For some time past Alva had been begging the King to relieve him of his post and in November 1579 his successor, Don Luis de Requesens, Grand Commander of Castile, arrived in Brussels. A month later the broken old Duke, complaining sadly that with all his hard work he had not won the King's approval, quitted the Netherlands for ever.

During the six years he had been in command more than eighteen thousand persons had been executed by his orders, while there is no means of counting the number who had died by massacre or in warfare. The news of his departure was everywhere received with the greatest rejoicings, and if the people had dared they would have celebrated the happy day with fireworks.

Alva's successor, Requesens, was hailed with joy. People felt that he could not govern worse than the departed Duke, and there was always the chance that he might rule a great deal better.

The new governor began by holding out hopes of peace, and both sides would have been thankful to end the ruinously expensive war, but neither party would yield a single point. The Prince of Orange still demanded what he had done from the outset—freedom of worship for every sect, government by natives only, and the restoration of all the privileges of the Netherlands.

Requesens, short of money and with troops that mutinied constantly, went so far as to suggest that those heretics who wished should return to the Catholic faith, while those who clung to Protestantism

should be allowed to betake themselves and all their goods into lifelong exile. William never flinched from his position, and the grudging offer was firmly declined.

Requesens then changed peaceful tactics to warlike ones. Mondragon was being closely besieged by the patriots in Middelburg, on the Isle of Walcheren, which was the only city in Zeeland not yet in the Prince's hands. Both sides understood the importance of its fate, for if it fell the Spanish hold on Zeeland would be entirely lost.

The Grand Commander sent two fleets to the Scheld, one under Julian Romero, the other under an admiral named D'Avila, with orders that they were to make a combined effort to save Middelburg.

At the end of January 1574, they came into conflict with Admiral Boisot, who was lying in wait in the Scheld with a powerful fleet, near a town called Bergen. As usual the Netherlanders, who were so often defeated on land, proved invincible on the sea, and the Spaniards retreated with a loss of fifteen ships and many hundred men.

Three weeks later the starving city surrendered on honourable terms granted by the Prince of Orange, who was now master of the whole province of Zeeland.

"Pray for rescue, wives and
mothers,—
Pray to-day!" the soldier said;
"To-morrow death's between us
And the wrong and shame we
dread."

Oh, they listened, looked and
waited,
Till their hope became despair;
And the sobs of low bewailing
Filled the pauses of their prayer.

JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER

CHAPTER XIX: *Mook Heath and Leyden*

WHILE William was directing operations around Middelburg, Louis was busy at the French court, where his eloquence and boldness of speech procured a large sum of money and promises of further help from Charles IX. In Germany Louis raised a small army of disorderly mercenaries and raw volunteers with the funds thus provided, and arranged to join his brother, so that the two together might relieve Leyden, which was being besieged by the Spaniards.

From beginning to end the march was an unfortunate one. Louis, with his brothers John and Henry, and Duke Christopher, a German nobleman, entered the Netherlands in February by way of the Rhine. He encamped near Maestricht, on the Meuse, intending to capture this city, though many of his mutinous troops had already deserted him.

William, who was in command of a small force, did his best to join the invading force, but ere he could succeed a large Spanish army swooped down on the Meuse and caught Louis in a terribly unfavourable position on Mook Heath. Cramped in a small space between two rivers, the Meuse and the Waal, the patriot army had little chance of a victory. The Spaniards cut them to pieces, and then butchered the survivors.

It was a sad, sad day for the Netherlands and for the Nassau family. Count John escaped, but Louis, Henry and Duke Christopher were never seen again. Their bodies were never recovered, but there can be

no doubt that all three perished on the bloody field of Mook Heath, giving their lives for a country not their own, save by generous adoption.

The gallant, daring, reckless Louis, still in the prime of life, and Henry, only twenty-four years old, died brave deaths in the cause of Dutch freedom, and their names will ever be remembered with loving respect and admiration.

News travelled slowly in those days, and it was some weeks before anything but vague rumours reached the Prince. It was only when no reply came to his repeated letters that he began to fear for his brothers' fate. When at last he was forced to believe them dead he felt the loss deeply, and turned more and more for help and consolation to John, the only brother now left to him.

The poor old mother at Dillenburg grieved sadly but proudly for Louis, her "heart's cherished son," and for Henry, the youngest of all her seventeen children, but she accepted the bereavement as God's will.

In the grief and discouragement which came to William after Mook Heath, there was only one small success to cheer his heart.

The Spanish soldiery had received no pay for three years, and immediately after the battle serious mutiny broke out in their ranks. With great difficulty Requesens raised funds to satisfy them, and with their newly gained wealth they held high revel at Antwerp.

While the feasting and jollity were at their height, Admiral Boisot, quick to seize his opportunity, sailed up the Scheld and captured or destroyed

fourteen Spanish ships which lay at anchor in the river. The merry mutineers rushed to arms in the midst of their festivities, but were too late to save the ships or prevent one of their admirals from falling into Boisot's hands.

Now the Prince had to put aside private griefs, and give his whole attention to the unfortunate city of Leyden, which stood in the gravest danger. For a short time the siege had been interrupted by the advance of Count Louis' army, but no sooner were the battle of Mook Heath and the mutiny over than the Spaniards closed once more round the town (May, 1574). If the citizens had been wise they would have made use of this precious interval to add to their stores of food, but by some grave mistake this was not done.

Possibly this neglect was due to the fact that the Grand Commander had not only offered a pardon if the town would surrender, but had set up reforms in several directions. By his orders the hated Council of Troubles and the Tenth Penny were both abolished, Alva's statute was broken up, and other hopeful changes were made.

There was a small party within Leyden which was very anxious to accept Requesens' offer, but the majority stood out boldly for Orange and liberty.

Of all the horrible sieges, of which this war was full, that of Leyden was probably the most ghastly. The first investment had lasted for nearly six months, and the town was enfeebled and ill-equipped in consequence. Plague stalked through the ranks of both besiegers and besieged, claiming many victims, and within the walls famine was its grim com-

panion; yet still the defences held, and neither side would yield.

William the Silent suffered the keenest anxiety for the fate of heroic little Leyden, and all that mortal man could accomplish he did to save it. He well knew that its only hope must come from the water which had befriended Alkmaar, for he had no army strong enough to dislodge the Spaniards in a land fight.

A glance at the map will show you that Leyden is in the province of Holland, six miles from the nearest shores of the German Ocean. All the land between the town and the sea lay below the level of high tide, and but for the dykes would have been flooded daily.

William went into camp at a spot between Delft and Rotterdam, from which he could control all the dykes near the besieged town; from there he worked for Leyden, and urged that the intervening country should be flooded, no matter at what sacrifice. For every objection made he had an answer ready.

"If the dykes are opened the crops will be ruined," said the people.

"Better a drowned land than a lost land," the Prince replied.

Finally, in August, consent was given, cattle and live stock were removed to places of safety, a large fleet of flat-bottomed boats was loaded with provisions for the starving city, and the dykes were pierced.

It was not a day too soon, for in Leyden all the bread had been eaten long ago and the inhabitants had been half starved for many weeks. On August 21st they managed to send word by pigeon post to

the Prince that their food supplies would not last more than four days longer.

When this dispatch reached the camp the waters were rising fast, but the Prince, worn out with toil and anxiety, lay seriously ill of fever. From his sick bed he wrote back, encouraging them to hold out yet a few days more, till the floods should be deep enough for his boats.

His doctors were in despair, declaring that the Prince would die if he insisted on working while his condition was so alarming, but nothing could take his mind from Leyden. His unrest is not to be wondered at when we remember that, apart from the dreadful fate of his friends within the walls in case of surrender, Leyden was the key of Holland. If Leyden fell into Requesens' hands, Holland, the last hope of the patriots, must surely follow.

To the joy of the whole nation the Prince's fever gradually abated, and by the beginning of September his preparations were completed and the fleet set out on its voyage across the drowned land. For the first mile or two all went well, but as they neared Leyden the level of the ground rose, with the result that the water became shallower—too shallow even for such flat boats as those Boisot had chosen.

With a west wind the sea would have been driven inland in sufficient depth to float the relieving fleet, but most unfortunately the breeze blew for days off the land, causing the water to sink rather than rise. The whole fleet lay becalmed midway on its voyage, unable either to retire or advance.

Within Leyden the hopes aroused by William's letter grew dimmer and fainter with every hour that

passed. Wasted men and women, almost too weak to stand, watched unceasingly from the top of a tower within the walls, but saw no sign of their deliverers.

Almost the last of their food was gone, and the starving creatures fed on mice, rats, and even the green leaves from the trees and the weeds that grew between the cobble stones which paved the streets. Every day scores died from hunger or the plague, leaving the survivors with hardly strength enough to bury them.

Leyden was at its last gasp before relief drew near, in the form of a gale from the north-west, combined with a spring tide. The ocean rushed furiously over the land, and soon the depth of the water might be measured by feet instead of inches. By October 2nd Boisot's fleet was released from its imprisonment.

On went the boats, defeating a few Spanish sentinel ships at dead of night, and coming within bow-shot of the town by dawn. Requesens' camp was flooded out by the still rising waters, and as day broke he fled toward the Hague. Many of his troops were drowned on the way, or harpooned by Boisot's ferocious Sea Beggars.

A few hours later the patriot Admiral came into Leyden, where the citizens received him with a thankfulness too deep for words. As the triumphant fleet rowed along the canals the pitying sailors threw bread right and left to the famishing people in the streets. Then all made their way to the great church of Leyden, where they offered solemn thanksgiving for the miraculous escape of the town.

The next day William insisted on coming himself,

though he was only half recovered from his dangerous sickness. The wind, as if it sympathised with the patriots, had changed its quarter again, and was now driving the water back seawards.

The rebuilding of the dykes was begun at once, and as a reward for its heavy suffering, the Prince established in Leyden a university which is well known and highly esteemed to this day.

The Abbess was of noble blood,
But early took the veil and hood
Ere upon life she cast a look,
Or knew the world that she forsook

SIR WALTER SCOTT

CHAPTER XX: *Charlotte of Bourbon*

WHEN the long strain of the siege of Leyden was over, there came a lull in the war. The Spaniards had suffered a severe defeat, and Requesens would gladly have ended the fighting. But, though Spain was willing to yield slightly, the difference in opinion between sovereign and rebels was too great ever to be bridged. The overtures of peace ended, as others had done, in nothing.

To the Prince of Orange, the breathing space after Leyden was saved gave an opportunity for altering the government of Holland. For the time being he and the Estates divided authority, but this system was working unsatisfactorily and hampered all his actions. Accordingly he summoned the Estates of Holland and proposed either that he should have absolute control or that the Estates should assume this position themselves, and allow him to retire finally to a quiet life at Dillenburg.

He assured them that he had not grown weary of the struggle; if they chose he would continue to direct matters, and would shed his last drop of blood in the service of his country. But if he stayed they must give him greater power, so that he could act freely.

The Estates were startled, but they well knew how little they could do without the Prince, and agreed to his proposal at once. William the Silent was appointed Governor, or Regent, of Holland, "there being conferred on his Excellency absolute power, authority and sovereign control in the conduct of

common affairs of the land without exception." Which meant that henceforward Orange was the ruler of the province of Holland, as much a king as Philip II, though in a smaller country than Spain. But for a little while Philip was still, in name, Count of the Netherlands.

The winter and spring of 1575 passed uneventfully in the useless negotiations for peace, but in the early summer one important event took place. This was the union of the two provinces of Holland and Zeeland under the rule of the Prince.

It was a great step forward, for one of the chief troubles of the Netherlands was that the different parts of it would not act together. Each province and city had its own government, and jealousy between the various bodies was very strong. William had always realized that "union is strength," and it was owing to his influence that Holland and Zeeland joined hands in June, 1575.

One of the articles of union decreed that the Prince of Orange was to protect the Protestant worship, and suppress the Roman Catholic religion. William was tolerant in advance of his time, as we know, and would not consent to the persecution of Papists. He insisted that the words "Roman Catholic religion" should be taken out, and the Estates unwillingly agreed to replace them by the vague phrase, "religion at variance with the gospel." All his life through, William was determined to put a stop to persecution of any kind.

In our eyes these Reformers of the sixteenth century may seem very narrow-minded and bigoted, but they went a good way for men who had suffered

so terribly from the effects of Catholic bitterness as they had done.

About this time, William, who was generally so cautious and prudent, acted in his private life in a way that angered friends and foes alike. This was in the matter of his third marriage, which took place in the summer of 1576. As in the case of Anne of Saxony, many difficulties were raised by relations, and months passed in correspondence.

The bride was Charlotte of Bourbon, a younger daughter of Louis, Duke of Montpensier. From the beginning it had been decided that she should be a nun, and when still quite a little girl she was confided to the care of her aunt, the Abbess of the convent of Jouarre. When the Abbess died some years later, Charlotte, though only about twelve years old, was forced to take the vows of a nun, so that she might succeed her aunt as abbess, and thus keep the rich revenues of the convent in the family.

The little girl was educated carefully for her responsible duties, but she was never happy and hated the convent life she was obliged to lead. When she was about eighteen she made a solemn statement that she had been forced to take the vows against her will. As time went on she came under Protestant influences, and she grew to detest being abbess to such a degree that in 1572 she left the convent for ever.

In the eyes of the Catholics this was one of the most dreadful crimes a Catholic could commit. Her father was so wrathful that Charlotte could not go back home, and consequently she made her way to Germany, to the Elector Palatine, who had shown himself a true friend to all Protestants.

He received her very kindly, but failed to soften the feelings of her relations. The Duke of Montpensier wrote bitterly that "she is the first of her race to desert the holy faith of her ancestors."

Three years later William of Orange sent an offer of marriage to Charlotte. He had heard much of her fine character, and longed for a companion in his lonely life. Anne of Saxony was still alive at this time, but she had treated him very badly, was hopelessly mad, and he no longer counted her as his wife.

There was no regular system of divorce in the early days of Protestantism, but several eminent Reformed preachers declared that in their opinion the Prince was free to marry again. William acted on this counsel in the face of much opposition, and the marriage took place.

From a political point of view the Prince could hardly have done anything more unwise, for the wedding offended everybody, and particularly those who might have helped the Netherlands.

Orange's German friends were scandalized that he should wed another wife while their kinswoman Anne was still alive, and Charlotte's Catholic relations at the French court considered it the height of wickedness for a nun to marry. Even good John of Nassau was grieved and shocked.

In spite of all this disturbance, Charlotte made the best of wives. She and William lived together very happily, and in course of time had six daughters —Louise, Elizabeth, Catherine, Charlotte Flandrina, Charlotte Brabantina and Emilie. Before her death she had the happiness of being reconciled to her father.

By this time the Grand Commander had found that

peace could not be made, and he renewed the war with greater success than in 1574.

"They stormed Oudewater (a town in Holland) and delivered it over to all imaginable cruelties, sparing neither sex nor age," wrote William to John. Schoonhoven, warned by this fate, surrendered without fighting. Next came a wonderful Spanish exploit which rivalled Mondragon's night march to Tergoes three years before, and took place in the same part of the country.

Starting from the island of Tholen, which Mondragon had captured in 1572, Requesens' soldiers waded on a stormy night through six miles of neck-deep water. They had only flashes of lightning to illumine their way, and part of the time they were marching under the fire of the patriot vessels. This time the water proved their friend, protecting their bodies from the shots of the enemy. The Zeelanders on board attacked them not only with musketry, but with harpoons, boat-hooks and flails.

Many were the silent conflicts fought shoulder deep in the water; many were the unfortunate Spaniards struck down at each flash of lightning.

In spite of darkness and the sea, fire, sword and foes, on went the indomitable little band, arriving, after a six hours' journey, on the island of Duiveland. They ate a little of the food they had brought with them, prayed to the Virgin and fell upon their foes.

Charles Boisot, brother of the Admiral, who was in command upon the island, was accidentally killed by his own men, and after that panic seized the

patriots, who had little expected a Spanish attack. They fell an easy prey to the gallant invaders.

But the work of the Grand Commander's troops was not yet over. From Duiveland they waded across a second and narrower strait to another island, that of Schouwen. Here again they were completely successful.

The soldiers paid by the States behaved in a most cowardly manner when their foes arose suddenly out of the sea and fled within the walls of Zierickzee, near by. The town was immediately invested by Mondragon, and underwent a long siege, the result of which will be told later.

When the Father of his Country
Through the northland riding came,
And the roofs were starred with banners,
And the steeples rang acclaim; . . .
Slowly passed that august presence
Down the thronged and shouting street.
JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER

CHAPTER XXI: *The Hour of Success*

THE loss of the Zeeland islands was a great blow to the patriots, for it cut Zeeland into two portions—under Requesens and under Orange respectively. The latter saw clearly that the time had come for the country to renounce allegiance to Philip II in word, as they had long done in deed, and to offer the sovereignty to some other monarch who would help them with men and money to free themselves from Spain.

"This land," said William, "is a rich bride, for whom there are many suitors."

Accordingly, in October the Estates met at Delft, and all agreed that they must forsake Philip and seek foreign aid. Only the two small provinces of Holland and Zeeland were concerned in this step, and it was these two which afterward became the basis of the great and unconquerable Dutch Republic.

Early in 1576 a new turn was given to affairs by the sudden death of Requesens. His end was so unexpected that Philip, away in Spain, had no time to appoint a successor, and the confusion that was caused among the Spanish soldiery and at government head-quarters in Brussels, was all to the advantage of the patriots.

The Prince was quick to seize his opportunity,

and, thanks to his activity, a new, closer and more satisfactory alliance between Holland and Zeeland, known as the Union of Utrecht, was formed. William would dearly have liked to include a larger portion of the Netherlands, but the remaining provinces were mostly loyal to Spain.

Besides, in the south, originally the most strongly Protestant of the whole country, Alva's unceasing persecutions had had a great effect on the Reformed religion, and many people had returned to the Catholic faith. The fifteen provinces were divided from the two by the deep gulfs of allegiance and religious belief, and, at that time at least, co-operation was impossible.

The Union of Delft was signed in March, 1576. Three months later Zierickssee was forced to surrender to Mondragon. The loss of this important town was a great disappointment to William, who wrote, "Had we received the least succour in the world from any side, the poor city should never have fallen."

He had done his best to send Zierickssee help by sea, but his fleet was defeated, and brave Boisot, who was in command, lost his life in the attempt.

The moment the long siege ended, the Spanish troops broke out into violent mutiny. Nothing would restrain them; they seized towns and money and kept the whole country in a state of terror. Finally they took possession of Antwerp, burnt and plundered the city, and treated its inhabitants with the most horrible cruelty, slaying and torturing them in hundreds.

When the news of the "Spanish Fury," as it was called, spread over the country, despairing horror

"AN EPISODE IN THE SPANISH FURY"—*Page 142*

for a while broke down the barriers which difference of race and religion had set up.

Urged by the Prince, who worked tirelessly, north and south forgot their disagreements, and, remembering only their common wrongs, bound themselves together in a league called the Pacification of Ghent. In this confederation the religious difficulty was laid aside for future settlement, the Prince's hope being that Roman Catholics and Protestants would prove tolerant to one another.

Hardly was the Pacification signed, when the new governor of the Netherlands arrived, disguised, for some unexplained reason, as a Moorish slave. This was Don John of Austria, Philip's half-brother, a brilliant soldier and handsome cavalier of thirty, who imagined that he was setting forth to conquer the world.

While William had been painfully trying to bring liberty and light into the darkness of the Netherlands, the picturesque Don John had reaped great glory from a romantic crusade against the Turks. Now the real and the gilded hero stood face to face.

Philip had directed his brother to be friendly toward the rebellious provinces, but to yield nothing to them—rather an impossible attitude, as Don John soon discovered. Before long he was forced to consent to William's two points—firstly, that the Spanish troops should leave the country; secondly, that he himself should confirm the Pacification of Ghent.

These concessions were words, not deeds, for though the second point was promised in a treaty called, very inappropriately, the Perpetual Edict,

no guarantees for its fulfilment were given. As William knew to his cost, Philip II, the real director of affairs, was as slippery as an eel, and highly skilled in the art of wriggling out of his promises.

However, the first pledge really was fulfilled, for in April, 1577, funds were raised to settle the arrears of the men's pay, and the Spanish soldiery quitted the Netherlands. The joy of the people was intense, and an immense crowd watched the regiments embark. The Netherlanders' happiness would have been greater still but for the fact that ten thousand German soldiers still remained in the country. Besides, the Spaniards might come back; for who could trust the word of Philip II? This foreboding proved later to be only too well founded.

When the troops had gone Don John was allowed to enter Brussels in state, and he established himself with great pomp in the capital. But he soon found how uncertain his position was, for his brilliant enemy beset him on all sides. The Spanish grandee might be a fine general, but he was a poor statesman, and William was much too clever for him.

Orange continually pressed that, now the Pacification had been signed by the King, it should be at once carried out. Poor Don John, who did not dare to yield except on paper, grew so weary and baffled that he retired from Brussels. On the battle-field he had confidence in his own powers, so he renewed the war by seizing the citadel of Namur.

This done, he wasted much time in plotting with a French princess who chanced to be passing through the town. Their joint schemes led to nothing, and while Don John talked to a beautiful woman, William

the Silent worked and watched with excellent results.

At last the seventeen provinces were united, the Spanish troops were gone, and success came rapidly to the Father of his Country. The Spaniards gave up Zieriсksee, and once more the whole of Zeeland was under the Prince's control; Breda, his own town, was recovered, and Utrecht, Haarlem, Ghent and Antwerp accepted his authority.

William had entire command north of the mouth of the Scheld, and south of that boundary his power was far larger than Don John's. His greatest triumph of all came when he was entreated to enter Brussels in state as protector of the Netherlands.

In 1567 William of Orange had left Brussels hurriedly to take refuge at Dillenburg. He had never visited the capital in the ten years that had passed since then. He received the invitation with great pleasure, but the consent of Holland and Zeeland was difficult to obtain, and Princess Charlotte dreaded his going to the city where Egmont and Horn had met their deaths. It was with many tears and forebodings that she watched her husband depart.

He first went to Antwerp, where he received the most enthusiastic of welcomes, and after spending a few days there journeyed to Brussels by canal. Three gorgeously decorated barges were provided for the short voyage. The first was spread with a lordly banquet; the second, hung with the banners of the seventeen provinces, was for the Prince; while the third was filled with men dressed in emblematic costumes representing the downfall of Spain and the triumph of Liberty.

September 23rd, 1577, was the proudest day of William's whole life, in which there were so few moments of triumph and so many of defeat. While his procession was still several miles from Brussels hundreds of the citizens trooped out to meet and greet him. He was escorted to the capital by a huge crowd, which kept pace on either bank of the canal with his boat's progress along the water.

"Long live Father William!" they cried again and again with the utmost affection and respect. Nothing they could do was good enough for their leader, no love of theirs sufficiently strong to show their gratitude. The occasion was marked by the most splendid ceremonies that the citizens could devise.

This visit to Brussels marked the height of the Prince's career. In public he was honoured and adored by a whole nation, and in private he was passing through one of the happiest periods of his life.

The marriage that, in the eyes of his friends, had promised so ill, had turned out exceedingly well. Charlotte of Bourbon was an ideal wife, and was now the mother of two little girls, Louise Juliana and Elizabeth. Her step-children loved her dearly, and the family party at the Prinsenhof (Prince's house), as William's residence was called, was a very happy one. "Our girls, big and little," Charlotte affectionately called William's five daughters. To the Prince himself she was all that was sympathetic, good and true.

Creed and rite perchance may differ,
Yet our faith and hope be one.
JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER

CHAPTER XXII: *The Renewal of War*

THE next few months passed in negotiations and correspondence, plots and appointments, but without actual fighting.

William broke off the attempts which Don John was making to patch up peace, for there could be no lasting settlement when neither side would yield the main point—the religious question. His firm resolution was a relief to his mother, the good old Countess Juliana, who had feared he might be tempted to end the war on the Spanish terms.

"High-born prince, heart-dear lord and son," she wrote about this time, "my heart longs for certain tidings of my lord, for methinks the peace now in prospect will prove but an oppression to soul and conscience. I trust my heart-dear lord and son will be supported by Divine grace to do nothing against God and his own soul's salvation." Then, with motherly care and remembrance of many attempts which his enemies had made to murder her son, she added: "I implore my lord not to allow himself to be persuaded to go to dangerous places, for the world is full of craft."

Charlotte had felt the same about her husband's visit to Brussels, for William lived in the midst of stealthy foes, and his life was never safe.

In the hour of greatest success the Prince had to face a new difficulty caused by that very success.

Some of the great Netherland nobles, the Duke of Aerschot, Jerome Champagny and others, became very jealous of his hard-won influence in the country, and tried to break his power by bringing in a foreigner, whom they set up in a position of authority.

Fortunately for the Prince, the Austrian noble they chose, the Archduke Matthias, brother of the Emperor of Germany, was very young, weak and easy-going. He had no will of his own, and though he ruled the country in name, William issued his own orders through him and in reality continued to govern.

As a reply to this plot, the country showed its trust in Orange by appointing him Ruward of Brabant. The Ruward was not a dictator or a protector or a stadtholder, but had to perform some of the duties of each; he was the highest officer in the State, and the duration of the tenure of his office was not limited.

At about the same period the fickle Duke of Aerschot was appointed Governor of Flanders by the State Council. Ghent, the capital of the province, was as turbulent a city now as it had been when the Emperor Charles V tamed it nearly forty years earlier. The Ghenters adored the Prince of Orange, but hated the Roman Catholic Aerschot, and, led by two young nobles named Imbize and Ryhove, they revolted against the Duke's appointment.

An excited mob under Ryhove marched to the Duke's residence and took him prisoner. The crowd would have killed him more than once, but Ryhove placed himself in front of the governor, and saved his life at the risk of his own. The burghers declared that Aerschot was plotting with Don John against Orange, so they set up a government of their own,

with Ryhove at their head, until William could make other arrangements for them.

The revolution passed off from beginning to end without bloodshed or any other disorder, and a few weeks later the prisoner was set free.

December, 1577, was an eventful month. On the 7th, the States-General met and formally threw off the authority of Don John, declaring him an enemy to the country, and all who helped him, traitors and rebels, whose estates should be forfeited. This action was equal to a fresh declaration of war.

Three days later a new Union of Brussels was signed, in which Roman Catholics and Reformers agreed each to worship as they thought right, and not to interfere with one another. At last, though not for long, William saw his dream of religious toleration realized.

Immediately afterward war broke out afresh. The patriots had good hopes of success, for at last Elizabeth of England was willing to help them with money and troops.

Don John was defiant and threatened many things.

"His Catholic Majesty has commissioned me to make war upon these rebellious provinces," he said, "and I will do so with all my heart."

Unfortunately for the Netherlands he had good reason for his confidence, for Prince Alexander Farnese, Duke of Parma, and son of the Duchess Margaret, had just arrived in the Netherlands to help his uncle, bringing back with him the troops William had obliged Don John to send away a few months earlier.

The forces of the States, though nearly as numerous as those on the Spanish side, had been put under the command of unworthy and jealous nobles. Two of them, Lalain and the Vicomte de Gand, were traitors to the cause. They were in the secret pay of Spain, and made an excuse to be absent from the army when the time for fighting came.

In the early days of 1578 the two armies met at Gemblours, near Namur. The patriots were not ready to give battle, and were retiring in some disorder, owing to the difficult nature of the ground, when the Prince of Parma—who, though quite young, was a magnificent soldier—fell upon them from behind and on one side at the same moment.

The attack was unexpected, and the retreating troops were penned in on the second flank by a deep ravine. The men lost their heads entirely. Philip of Egmont, eldest son of the Count, did his best to rally them, but in vain; they broke ranks, and allowed the Spaniards to cut them down as a scythe levels a field of grass.

In less than two hours nine or ten thousand men were either killed or taken prisoners, all their guns and baggage were captured, and the patriot army existed no longer. Parma won this brilliant victory without losing more than a score or so of his own men. It was small wonder that the Spanish soldiers were believed by the world of their day to be unconquerable.

They were boldest of the bold, skilful, brutal, quick to take advantage of an enemy's weakness; veteran troops, with many years of fighting behind them, they were commanded by two of the finest

generals then living, Don John of Austria and the Duke of Parma.

It was hardly likely that the half-raw troops of the Netherland army, whose officers were unfaithful to their cause, or were young, inexperienced men, could compete against the Spanish armies. It is a proof of the Dutch doggedness and pluck that they ventured to do so time and again, often with failure, rarely with triumph, till after many heart-breaking years they succeeded at last in crushing the power of Spain for ever.

The seasons came, the seasons passed,
They watched their fellows die;
But still their thought was forward cast,
Their courage still was high.

HENRY NEWBOLT

CHAPTER XXIII: *A Revolution and a Victory*

THE Spaniards did not rest on the laurels won at Gemblours. Don John marched his army triumphantly through the eastern provinces, taking town after town all along his route. Some places submitted without resistance, some were reduced by siege; at all of them, when captured, the Spaniards perpetrated their usual cruelties.

At Sichem, for instance, the commander was hanged from the frame of one of his own windows, while the garrison was exterminated. By their very brutalities the Spaniards roused the courage of their foes, for the most peaceable nation in the world will not submit to unlimited suffering.

The defeat at Gemblours proved the death-blow to the authority of Matthias. At best this weak young man had been under Orange's thumb, and now that Roman Catholic plotting and treachery had led to disaster in the field, the people of Brussels spoke out hotly against the Popish nobles who had brought Matthias forward. In some ways the battle of Gemblours was a blessing in disguise to the patriots, for it united them more firmly than before and redoubled their loyalty to the Prince of Orange.

What the cause of liberty lost at Gemblours it gained to a great extent at Amsterdam. This city, the capital of Holland, and ranking only after Brussels and Antwerp in importance in the whole Netherlands, had been one of the few places in the north to remain faithful to Philip. It was a large, rich camp of the enemy planted in the midst of friendly territory,

and for years it had refused to accept William's terms.

At last, a week or two after Gemblours, the city came to an arrangement with the Prince and the Estates, which is known as the "Satisfaction" of Amsterdam. By this treaty Roman Catholicism was established as the religion of Amsterdam, but toleration was secured for the Protestants, who were to be permitted to worship as they pleased outside the city walls. The agreement gave great joy to all Holland and Zeeland, and it was a triumph for William to accomplish this important step without any bloodshed.

For some time past Philip II had been hardly hit by this ruinous war, which had dragged on for nearly ten years without crushing the dogged "men of butter." The Seigneur de Selles, brother of Noircarmes, now arrived from Spain with fresh proposals of peace. As usual, neither party would yield one jot of its demands, and nothing remained but to fight out the quarrel to the bitter end.

Preparations for renewed warfare were rapidly made. By means of more taxes and a loan which he raised from the burghers of Antwerp, William the Silent collected sufficient funds for a fresh army. In spite of the last defeat he again appointed discontented nobles—Aerschot, Lalain, Philip of Egmont and others—to the chief command. His motive in doing this was to soothe their unreasonable jealousy of himself. His intentions were excellent, but the result was bad, for nearly all the nobles, at one time or another, proved disloyal to their trust.

Don John, on his side, had succeeded in per-

suading the King to send him a large sum of money, with which he was able to command a powerful army of thirty thousand men.

Meanwhile, before fighting could begin, trouble occurred in Amsterdam. The Protestants there had increased rapidly since the "Satisfaction," and they were angry because all the magistrates were Catholics. The Reformers considered that they had not been fairly used in the carrying out of the treaty, and a revolution was headed by William Bardez, an ardent Protestant and follower of Orange.

He arranged with Sonoy, who was governor of North Holland, to send a party of experienced troops to his aid, and many of the citizens promised to rise when Bardez gave the signal. This signal took the form of one of his friends stepping out on to the balcony of the council room, taking off his hat and then putting it on again.

A moment before, the square outside had been quiet and well-nigh deserted. Now soldiers sprang up on all sides from the nooks where they had been hidden, and a sailor ran through the town waving a flag and shouting lustily:

"All ye who love the Prince of Orange, take heart and follow me!"

The citizens came out of their houses, well armed, and Bardez led a large body of men to the council room, where he arrested all the magistrates, while his confederates did the same to every priest they could discover. The prisoners believed they were going to certain death, but, instead, they were merely put outside the city walls and forbidden ever to come back again.

The triumphant Protestants appointed Bardez and others of their number to replace the banished magistrates, and thus ended the peaceful revolution of Amsterdam. From that day forward the Protestants held the chief power in the capital of Holland, though the Prince of Orange insisted that they should be more tolerant to the Catholics than the Catholics had been to them.

Shortly afterward another battle between Don John and the Estates took place at Rijnemants, where the royalists were defeated by a patriot army not much more than half as numerous as their own.

It seemed now that the reverses which had befallen William the Silent and his troops so often had descended upon the Spaniards. Don John and Parma were both excellent generals, but lack of money and sickness among their men proved heavy drawbacks to their plans. Philip seemed to have forgotten them, and could not, or would not, send them funds —a fate from which all his lieutenants in the Low Countries suffered at one time or another.

Gay Don John of Austria had changed sadly since his arrival in disguise two years earlier. Then he had been proud, confident, light-hearted, fresh from a great victory and feeling certain of winning further fame in the Netherlands. By the summer of 1578 he was a broken-down, humiliated man in the grip of a dangerous fever.

As he felt his strength ebbing he wrote piteous letters to the brother and master who had treated him so ill.

"Thus I remain perplexed and confused," ran one epistle, "desiring, more than life, some decision on

your Majesty's part, for which I have implored so many times"; and again, later, "Our lives are at stake upon this game, and all we wish is to lose them honourably."

Poor Don John! The hero of Lepanto deserved a better fate than to waste away in an empty pigeon-house, to which he had been moved from the camp, which was reeking with pestilence. At the last he appointed Parma to succeed him until the King should make his wishes known, and died on the first of October 1578.

Where manly hearts were failing,
where
The throngful streets grew foul
with death.

JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER

CHAPTER XXIV: *The Union of Utrecht*

WHILST Don John was dying on the heights above Namur, William had at last found a royal personage who was willing to act as the protector of the Netherlands. This was Francis, Duke of Alençon and Anjou, and brother of the King of France. He was an entirely treacherous, false and unworthy man, and Orange knew it, but politically he was a powerful helper. The Prince risked using a bad instrument to aid a good cause.

He believed that the Netherlands could not continue the war without foreign help, and thought that the false Anjou would be a better helper than the intolerant Philip.

In August, 1578, an agreement was drawn up, by which the Duke was to bring twelve thousand soldiers into the Netherlands, for three months, and smaller forces after that till the war ended. In return, the States-General named him "Defender of the Liberty of the Netherlands," and practically promised to make him their sovereign when the King of Spain should be finally overthrown.

This same summer Orange arranged a Religious Peace, as it was called, giving freedom of worship to all. Unfortunately this broad-minded measure came to very little, for even the Prince's nearest and dearest did not sympathize with his wide toleration. Count John, now governor of Guelderland, was one of the strongest objectors to the Religious Peace.

"Now that we have driven the Papists out of Guelderland," he said, "let us do our utmost to keep

them outside." The Catholic province of Hainault disapproved for exactly the opposite reason. In fact, the Religious Peace pleased neither Catholic nor Protestant, and was never effectively carried out.

The dying Don John had named his nephew Farnese to succeed him as governor of the Netherlands, and Philip soon confirmed this appointment. William saw at once that fresh dangers threatened his country's cause, for the new Spanish commander was an even better soldier than Don John, a much cleverer man, and was, besides, as ruthless as Alva himself had been. All this boded ill for the Netherlands.

Parma's task was made easier by the discord which tore the Low Countries, in spite of the union that was supposed to bind the seventeen provinces together. In the southern Catholic portion of the land, which is now Belgium, there was a strong party of Malcontents, as they were called, who objected to being ruled by a Protestant like William of Orange. Also, as we have already seen, there were many jealous nobles who longed for the overthrow of the people's hero, the Prince.

Toward the end of 1578 the Malcontent party stirred up a revolt against the Reformed religion in the important city of Ghent. On the other hand, a counter-movement was led by Ryhove, the hero of the earlier rebellion, against the Duke of Aerschot. Ryhove was a bad, desperate man, who disgraced his cause by brutally hanging two citizens, Hessels, a former Blood-Councillor, and Visch.

Next came a repetition of the image-breaking riots of 1566. The Ghenters rose against the Catholics, turned them all out of the city, and sacked their

churches. This outbreak greatly enraged the Prince of Orange, who arrived at Ghent early in December, determined to put down the disturbances with a firm hand.

As always in times of unrest, William stood out in bold relief, a tower of strength and sagacity.

"I admire his wisdom daily more and more," said a supporter of his at this time; "I see those who profess themselves his friends causing him more annoyance than his foes; while, nevertheless, he ever remains true to himself, is driven by no tempests from his equanimity, nor provoked by repeated injuries to immoderate action."

In less than a month the Prince had skilfully soothed all parties, and obtained their consent to a new religious peace, very similar to the one which had been drawn up the summer before.

The next few months were most difficult ones for the lion-hearted Prince. Discord was rife all through the Netherlands, and plot and revolt followed one another incessantly. As a Dutch historian says, "There was nothing but dissensions, jealousies, heart-burnings, hatred; every one claimed to rule, no one would obey."

Parma was clever enough to take full advantage of this confusion, and to draw away loyalty from William wherever he could. He used bribes freely to persuade men and cities to desert the Prince and return to the allegiance of Spain.

Soon Parma had his reward, for at the beginning of 1579 the important Treaty of Arras was signed by the ten Roman Catholic provinces of the south. By it they united to maintain the old religion against

the new—in other words, they gave up all attempt at freedom and submitted to Philip.

The Protestants were quick to see the danger in which this split placed them, and in the same month the remaining provinces, Holland, Zeeland, Guelderland, Utrecht, Overyssel, Friesland and Drenthe, boldly threw off the yoke of Philip and defended the Reformed faith by the Union of Utrecht.

The Treaty of Arras at one stroke had undone the Pacification of Ghent, the Perpetual Edict and the Union of Brussels, all of which had aimed to unite the Catholics and Protestants; but the brave little Union of Utrecht proved the beginning of a nation which came to be as powerful and prosperous as ever Spain had been in her proudest days.

By submitting to Philip the Catholic provinces saved themselves years of war, but lost independence and a glorious future.

The Union of Utrecht was not so much due to William as to Count John. The Treaty of Arras was a heavy disappointment to the Prince, who saw now that his dreams of a united Netherlands would never come true. He began to understand that the Protestant north and the Catholic south were too utterly different ever to blend together.

This has been proved all through their history. To-day Holland and Belgium are distinct and separate nations. They have been united more than once in their history, and the arrangement has always failed.

It must not be supposed that Alexander Farnese had bribed instead of fighting. He had done both, with all his usual cleverness In March he came

suddenly on the town of Maestricht, in Liège, and laid siege to it. The garrison was brave, but small in numbers, and the Prince of Orange implored the States to send speedy aid to this important city, "the gate to Germany," as it was called.

Inside the walls the burghers, and even their wives, fought side by side with the soldiers in defence of their town. Beyond the fortifications Parma attacked the gates, and set a number of miners at work to tunnel beneath the moat and walls, so that the defences might be blown up from underneath.

There was great loss of life on both sides. Many of Parma's officers and men, including Count Berlaymont, were killed in the assaults, while of the garrison only four hundred men remained, and they were nearly all wounded. William had collected a force which advanced to Maestricht, but found it impossible to relieve the city, so closely was it invested by Parma and his troops.

At last one night a Spanish sentinel, who was going his rounds outside the breastwork, found a small hole in it which had been made by the last assault. He enlarged the breach sufficiently to admit his body, and crept into the city, where he found that no watch was being kept. The inhabitants, one and all, were too worn out to do anything but sleep.

The soldier returned quietly through the hole, and took his tale straight to Parma, who led a surprise assault just as dawn was breaking. The city was trapped in its sleep, and soon the battle turned to a massacre, for the Spaniards behaved with all their usual cruelty. In two days Maestricht was an empty and desolate ruin.

Oh, what a rash and bloody deed
is this!

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

CHAPTER XXV: *Varying Fortunes*

THE higher men rise, the more enemies are they likely to have. William the Silent knew this only too well, for not once, but many times had he suffered from the jealousy of men who did their best to steal his power.

Since his early manhood bitter tongues had clacked against him. Granvelle, Margaret of Parma, Alva, the nobles, had all in turn blackened his character and adversely criticized his conduct. In these later years of his life it was still the same.

People blamed him because Maestricht had been taken (though he had done his best to save it), just as they always blamed him when anything went wrong. He took their harsh words without reproach, and went quietly on with the work he felt called upon to do. About this time Philip offered him very rich bribes if he would submit to Spain, including the liberty of his eldest son, Philip William; these tempting proposals he steadfastly refused.

Though Spanish gold could not buy "Father William," it drew away many of his supporters, and treachery began to be a painfully common thing. Even old, well-trusted men were not free from it. In 1579 the Seigneur de Bours, governor of Mechlin, made terms with Philip, and a few months later Count Renneburg, governor of Friesland and brother to Hoogstraaten, betrayed the town of Groningen into the hands of the Spaniards. Even William's own brother-in-law forsook him at last.

Groningen was an important place, the capital of

Friesland, and the patriots determined to recover it. It was therefore besieged by scanty forces under Sonoy, William Louis of Nassau (the son of Count John) and Count Hohenlohe.

When the investment had lasted three months a body of troops arrived, which had been sent by Parma to the relief of the city. Hohenlohe made a forced march out to meet these troops, with the result that his men were exhausted and suffering agonies of thirst when they came up with the fresh royalist army.

A battle was fought at Hardenberg Heath, at which Hohenlohe's forces were utterly defeated. The Spaniards relieved Groningen; some of the country people rose in rebellion, and, says Motley, "A small war now succeeded, with small generals, small armies, small campaigns and small sieges."

During these years the Prince of Orange was terribly lonely. He was often obliged to be away from Delft, where his wife and children had their home. Almost his only helper worthy of the name was his brother, and in 1580 Count John gave up his post in Guelderland and left the Netherlands for good.

Honest, kindly, generous Count John! For thirteen years he had been the most loyal of helpers to his beloved elder brother, and of late he had endured many discomforts in carrying out his duties as Stadtholder in Guelderland. The Estates kept him so short of money that the only lodging he could afford was a wretched, badly built, comfortless barrack, often unheated in the bitterest weather. Sometimes he even had difficulty in providing himself and his servants with food.

"The baker has given notice that he will supply no more bread after to-morrow," he wrote to his brother in November, 1580, "unless he is paid. . . . The cook has often no meat to roast, so that we are frequently obliged to go supperless to bed." And this treatment, after the Count had for years given freely of all he had in the service of the Netherlands!

The good old mother, Countess Juliana, had died the previous summer, and as his wife was also dead Count John felt that he was needed at home in Dillenburg to look after his large family and his estate. His withdrawal left William almost entirely alone, for Parma's bribes had wrought havoc among his few remaining friends.

The Prince was now forty-seven years of age, but care and misfortune had worn him so that he looked quite an old man. The dark, handsome, Spanish-looking youth of a quarter of a century before, with his brown eyes and hair and brown peaked beard, was, in 1580, a careworn elderly man, partly bald, with a keen, much-lined face. There is a print in the great museum at Amsterdam, showing him at this age, dressed in a suit of armour, and looking weary and troubled.

He had sufficient to harass his brave spirit, for in this same year Philip dealt him a fresh blow and a heavy one. By the advice of that cunning old fox, Cardinal Granvelle, the King of Spain published what is known as the Ban, a document which set forth William's offences, and offered a large reward to any-one who would compass his death.

"We declare him traitor and miscreant, enemy of ourselves and of the country," part of the excom-

munication ran. "We allow all to injure him in property or in life. And if anyone should be found sufficiently generous to rid us of this pest, delivering him to us alive or dead, or taking his life, we will cause to be furnished to him . . . the sum of twenty-five thousand crowns in gold. If he have committed any crime, *however heinous*, we promise to pardon him; and if he be not already noble, we will ennoble him for his valour."

Henceforth the Prince's steps were dogged by would-be assassins. A few months later he made a formal reply to the Ban by publishing a long statement which is known as the Apology, in which he declared that a ruler who treated his subjects as Philip had done could expect nothing but rebellion. He closed with the motto he had always so worthily upheld—"I will maintain."

This same eventful year, 1580, the Estates of Holland and Zeeland offered the sovereignty of these two provinces to William. He steadily refused to accept it, for he still clung to the idea that the Duke of Anjou should rule the Netherlands.

Meanwhile the war continued with more or less vigour, chiefly in the north-east. Renneberg, the traitor of Groningen, laid siege to Steenwyk, in the province of Drenthe. The patriots threw hollow balls containing letters, which promised relief, into the town, and in February, 1581, the siege was raised by John Norris, an English colonel who was fighting under the banner of Orange.

The spring passed quietly, but during the summer a very important event took place at the Hague. Representatives of the seven provinces assembled

"THE PRINCE'S STEPS WERE DOGGED BY WOULD-BE ASSASSINS"—*Page 168*

on July 15th, and solemnly gave up their allegiance to the King of Spain, declaring themselves entirely independent of his rule. Henceforward his name appeared no more on State documents; his seal was broken and replaced by that of the Prince of Orange. This action is known as the Abjuration.

William still looked to Anjou as the future sovereign of the united provinces, but, though most of the country was willing to accept him, Holland and Zeeland would have no ruler but their dearly loved "Father William." At last they persuaded the Prince to agree, at any rate for the moment, and in the same month that saw the act of abjuration he was invested with the temporary sovereignty of the two northern provinces.

The Archduke Matthias had never been more than an unwanted pawn in the great game Orange was playing, and since Anjou's installation he had no longer the shadow of authority. He left the Netherlands for good in October.

Though weak, the Archduke had at least been loyal and honest, and the Estates voted him a yearly pension of fifty thousand florins. Whether it was or was not regularly paid by the much-taxed country, history does not say.

O star of strength! I see thee stand
And smile upon my pain;
Thou beckonest with thy mailed hand,
And I am strong again.

HENRY W. LONGFELLOW

CHAPTER XXVI: *False Francis*

THE war dragged on. In the summer of 1581 Parma besieged Cambray, but retired hurriedly from the town when Anjou arrived with a large force of French soldiers. But the Duke went to England, courting Queen Elizabeth, his troops melted away, and soon Parma found himself free to attack another city.

This time he chose Tournay, in Hainault, and invested it closely. Its governor, the Prince of Espinoy, was away fighting in the north, but his wife defied Alexander Farnese. She was a brave woman, and came of good fighting blood, for she was daughter of Count Horn's sister.

During the siege she directed the work of defence herself, emboldening the garrison by her courage and steadfastness. Even when she was wounded in the arm during one of Parma's assaults on the town, she still persisted in keeping her place at the forefront of the fighting.

Unfortunately Prince Alexander's forces were so strong that no relief could be brought from without, although Orange and the Estates did their best to drive away the Spanish army. Worse still, within the walls a mischievous priest stirred the Catholic citizens to revolt, and it became impossible to hold Tournay any longer.

After two months of siege the brave Princess surrendered to Parma on honourable terms, and was allowed to retire from the city with all her property.

"On leaving the gates," says Motley, "the Princess

was received with such a shout of applause from the royal army that she seemed less like a defeated commander than a conqueror."

In the meantime Father William was working earnestly to get the Duke of Anjou installed as sovereign of the Netherlands. Looking back to-day, it is difficult to understand the Prince's eagerness for this man to rule his dearly loved country, for if ever there was a dangerous, faithless and treacherous prince, it was Francis Hercules, Duke of Alençon and Anjou.

The royal family of France, the Valois, to which this man belonged, was an utterly bad one, and he, the youngest, was the worst of all. He did not care one jot for the good of the Netherlands; all he considered was his own desire for power.

Yet this was the ruler whom William had chosen for the Low Countries, not because he either admired or respected him—he did not—but because at the time he could find no one better. Germany and England would not give substantial help; France, in the person of Anjou, was willing to do so, and in sheer despair the Prince of Orange accepted the offer. At the time he explained clearly that it was absolute necessity which drove him into the bargain with Anjou.

"To speak plainly," he said, "asking us to wait is very much as if you should keep a man three days without any food in the expectation of a magnificent banquet, should persuade him to refuse bread, and at the end of three days should tell him that the banquet was not ready, but that a still better one was in preparation. Would it not be better, then, that

the poor man, to avoid starvation, should wait no longer, but accept bread wherever he might find it? Such is our case at present."

During the autumn of this year (1581) the Duke of Anjou was in England wooing its fickle Queen, who finally refused to marry him, so tradition says, because he was so exceedingly ugly. So in February the Duke returned to the Netherlands, and landed at Flushing, accompanied by the Earl of Leicester, Lord Howard, Sir Philip Sidney, and other distinguished Englishmen from Elizabeth's court.

As the Duke stepped from his vessel he was met by the Prince of Orange, with Espinoy, and delegates from the States-General. Bells clanged, guns roared, people shouted—all was joy and gay welcome. Little did the people of Flushing guess how soon their cheers for this man would be turned to groans and hisses.

After visiting the neighbouring town of Middelburg the Duke set sail for Antwerp, oustide the walls of which his installation as sovereign Duke was to be held. The brilliant ceremony took place on February 17th, 1582, and was accompanied by all manner of pageantry and pomp. William of Orange himself laid the gorgeous mantle of the dukes of Brabant over the French Prince's shoulders.

Anjou took oath to maintain the liberties of the Netherlands, and signed a compact which had been drawn up in readiness. By this document he was to forfeit his position if he did not rule according to Netherland charters, and was to uphold "the Religion" as the Estates directed. In various ways his authority was so limited that it was really the Estates, and not he, who held the actual ruling power.

The Netherlands had learnt by very bitter lessons what might happen with an unfettered sovereign on the throne.

The agreement with Anjou was known as the Treaty of Bordeaux, because it had been first drawn up in that town.

The Duke was now ruler of Brabant, but he had not as yet been accepted by Holland and Zeeland. The Prince of Orange had, the year before, temporarily accepted the Stadtholderate of the northern provinces, and they were determined that he should now become their count and that the title should descend to his children.

William had always protested against this plan, for he hoped that the sovereignty would be conferred on Anjou. But just after the latter had been made Duke of Brabant, William had a dangerous illness, about which I shall tell you more fully in the next chapter. While he lay for weeks between life and death, Holland and Zeeland felt more strongly than ever how little they could afford to lose the Father of their Country.

Consequently, as soon as the Prince had recovered, they again pressed him extremely hard to accept the Countship. Though still very unwilling—for he believed that Anjou with his powerful French connections would be of more service to the country—the two provinces would take no refusal from him, and in the end he was obliged to agree.

In August, 1572, a month after the inauguration of Anjou, who was by now also Duke of Guelderland and Lord of Friesland, William the Silent was formally installed as hereditary Count of Holland and Zeeland.

False Francis

In spite of all he had gained, Anjou was anything but contented. He was jealous of Orange's influence and popularity with the people, and declared that he, Francis Duke of Anjou, only brother of the King of France, would no longer play second fiddle to "a beggarly German nobleman."

He arranged with his friends that his French soldiers should divide into parties and seize a number of important Netherland towns at the same moment, while he himself would secure Antwerp.

Somehow rumors of the plot leaked out, and the captain of the Antwerp guard sent a warning to the Prince of Orange. William consented that extra precautions should be taken for the safety of the city, but he had so little belief in the rumours that he also sent a message to the Duke, telling him of the treachery of which some suspected him.

The false Frenchman sent back a solemn and indignant reply, in which he declared that he would never hurt Antwerp, but was willing to shed his last drop of blood in her defence.

On the 17th of January, 1583, Anjou and Orange exchanged visits in the morning, and then went home, to opposite ends of the city, for their noonday meal. Between twelve and one all the citizens were at dinner too, and the streets were almost deserted.

As Anjou sat at meat in his lodgings, a messenger was ushered in, bringing a letter which he handed to the Duke. The latter had no sooner read it than he sprang up in great excitement, and ordered horses to be fetched instantly. Then, followed by a couple of hundred of his retinue, he rode out of Antwerp by the Kipdorp gate.

He crossed the drawbridge unmolested by the guard, who, since his passionate message to the Prince of Orange, had lost their suspicions of him, but when he reached the farther side he halted his horse. His troops were behind him, and rising in his stirrups he waved his hand to them.

"There is your city, my lads!" he cried. "Go and take possession of it."

Without a backward glance he spurred on his steed and galloped away to Borgerhout, a village a short distance beyond the wall, where he had stationed a large body of his French troops.

The coward left terrible things behind him, for no sooner had he spoken than the soldiers fell upon the guard at the gate, killing them all. Leaving a sufficient force behind them to defend the entrance, they next galloped through the streets of the city, on massacre intent.

"Captured town, captured town!" they shouted as they rode. "Long live Anjou! Long live the mass! Kill, kill, kill!"

Kill they did, in the most brutal fashion, rushing into the burghers' houses, murdering the inhabitants and seizing all the valuables they could find. At first the citizens were taken utterly by surprise, but as soon as they recovered from the shock they made a desperate resistance.

In that dreadful hour creeds were forgotten, and papist and heretic joined hands to defend their homes from the mad French soldiery. They fought with any weapons that came to hand, or, if they had none, hurled tiles and furniture on their enemies, to such good effect that they killed over fifteen hundred

Frenchmen. In the midst of the turmoil Orange arrived hurriedly from his house on the outskirts of Antwerp. As usual, all his influence was used on the side of peace, and he did everything he could to persuade the infuriated citizens that the whole affair was only a misunderstanding.

It was so evidently an act of planned treachery that for once the people refused to listen to Father William, and only ceased fighting because the false soldiers were by this time completely defeated. The French Fury, as this outbreak was called, destroyed the last vestige of confidence in Anjou. Instead of making him master of the country, it was the beginning of the end of his Netherland career.

They have ruled us for a hundred
years,
In truth I know not how,
But though they be fain of mastery,
They dare not claim it now.

HENRY NEWBOLT

CHAPTER XXVII: *The Stroke of the Assassin*

THE Ban which Philip II had put upon the Prince of Orange in 1580 had not been without effect. The King of Spain had made it lawful and praiseworthy for any man to deliver him the Prince's body alive or dead, and the Catholic priests had declared anyone a martyr who should accomplish the black deed.

Unscrupulous men were not slow in making the attempt when they were led to believe that riches, nobility and heavenly glory might be gained by the murderer of William of Orange. More than one plot was hatched, but though the Prince was surrounded by spies and dogged by assassins he escaped unharmed until the spring of 1582, three or four months before the terrible French Fury, which I told you about in the last chapter.

One Sunday in March, the Prince, after going to service in the morning, came home to dinner, bringing the French ambassador, Count Hohenlohe and several other guests to share the family meal, at which his son Maurice and two of his nephews were also present. All the company were gay and cheerful, many tales were told, and they sat a long time over the dessert.

When the meal ended William led the way from the large dining hall to his own private rooms, and stopped as he went to show his guests the beauty of a piece of tapestry which hung just inside the doorway leading to an ante-room. As he paused before the needlework a poorly clad youth of Spanish

aspect darted forward from within the ante-room, and fired a pistol at the Prince's head.

The bullet entered William's neck just under the right ear and passed through his mouth and jaw, dislodging two teeth.

In a moment the room was in confusion. Orange did not fall at once, but stood a few seconds, so blinded by the smoke and dazed by the shock that at first he hardly knew what had happened. When he realized that he had been shot and believed himself to be dying, his first thought was one of mercy for his murderer.

"Do not kill him," he said; "I forgive him my death." Then to his French guests he added, "Alas, what a faithful servant his Highness loses in me!"

His words of mercy were too late to save the assassin, for already thirty-three sword-stabs, given by William's friends and servants, had pierced his body, and he lay dead at his victim's feet.

The Prince was helped to bed, where his wound was examined by the surgeons. It was dangerous, but there was a hope of his recovery. The pistol had been fired at such close quarters that the fire from it had cauterized or burnt the wound in a way which had stopped dangerous bleeding from the veins.

Young Maurice, who was not yet fifteen, behaved with the coolness and wisdom of a clear-headed man. He ordered the body of the murderer to be searched, in order to discover evidence as to who had engaged him to shoot down Orange. Many of those present believed that Anjou and the French were at the bottom of the vile deed, but Maurice quickly found that all the papers in the dead man's pockets were

written in Spanish. He at once sent a servant back to the company, to show the documents and prove that the French party were innocent.

It turned out that the attempt on the Prince's life was a private plot, hatched by Caspar d'Anastro, a Spanish merchant in Antwerp. His business had been doing very badly, and he was attracted by the large sum offered in the Ban for the murder of William the Silent. He was not brave enough to risk his own skin in the venture, so he arranged with his cashier, Venero, that an apprentice named Jean Jaureguy should be entrusted with the deed.

Jaureguy was a fervent Catholic who believed that the world would gain by the death of that arch-heretic, the Prince of Orange, so when his master offered him nearly three thousand crowns if he would murder Orange, he willingly undertook to do so. After confessing to a priest, who gave him absolution for the crime he was about to commit, Jaureguy set forth on his mission. How he discharged it we have already seen.

Anastro escaped to Calais, but Venero and the priest paid for their share in the plot with their lives. The States-General intended to execute them with horrible tortures, but Orange wrote from his sick bed begging that they might be granted the mercy of a quiet death.

The great patriot leader did not die, though news of his death flew over Europe, but for weeks he had a hard fight for life. He was forbidden to talk, for fear of reopening the wound, but his active brain could not rest now, any more than it had done when he was stricken with fever in the camp near Leyden

twelve years before. He lay on his bed speechless, but writing messages and instructions incessantly.

The great danger of the injury lay in loss of blood, which, owing to the position of the wound, could not be stopped by bandages without choking the patient. At last, when the Prince's own doctors were in despair, Anjou's physician found a way out of the difficulty. He discovered that a man's thumb pressed firmly on the wound would stop the flow of blood without hindering the invalid's breathing.

So he arranged that day and night a servant was to sit beside the Prince, holding a thumb on the wound, until all fear of bleeding had ceased. From that moment William began slowly to recover health and strength.

The attack on him, and the long suspense which followed it, had been a terrible shock to his family. Princess Charlotte fainted again and again on hearing the news, and a letter from the eldest daughter, Marie, to her uncle at Dillenburg, paints a vivid picture of those dreadful weeks.

"Here we have been in great terror, thinking my lord must die," she wrote in April. "A fortnight after the shooting he had such a bleeding from a vein that was slightly grazed, that we gave up all hope. The hemorrhage lasted several days. He resigned himself to death, and bidding us all good-night, said, 'It is all over with me.'

"You cannot believe how troubled we were to see my lord in such pain, without being able to relieve him.

"Never shall I forget that day. But he has been saved by a miracle. There has been no hemorrhage

now for fourteen days, and the doctors and barbers [the barbers were the surgeons of the sixteenth century] think he will be completely restored to health. He has to keep perfectly still, and is not allowed to speak more than is necessary. . . . The doctors forbid my lord doing any business at present. I wish it were possible for your Excellency to see how my lord is changed and emaciated. There is really nothing on him but skin and bones. . . . "

Fortunately this state of weakness did not last. The Prince was quite out of danger and on the road to recovery when a second and very sad blow befell the family.

The Princess, who was never very strong, had been so weakened and upset by the shock of her husband's dangerous wound, that when a fever attacked her at the end of April she had no strength to fight it. On May 5th, three days after a solemn thanksgiving service for the Prince's recovery, she died, leaving six motherless little daughters, the youngest only three months old.

William almost had a relapse when he learnt the news, for he had loved his good wife very dearly and her death was a great grief to all the family.

The joy in Holland and Zeeland on Orange's recovery was so great, that, as I mentioned in the last chapter, he was obliged to accept permanently the Countship of these two provinces, which he had so often refused. He was never formally installed as Count, as Anjou had been in Brabant, for death interfered before the necessary documents had been drawn up and signed.

After the French Fury, when Anjou was distrusted

all through the country, the States of Brabant wished to make Orange their Duke. He, however, considered that the title still belonged to the French Prince, and refused to accept it.

He acted from the best of motives, but probably it would have been better for the country if he had been more ambitious for himself. He made a vain attempt to patch up peace between Brabant and the Duke, but Anjou's day in the Netherlands was over, and in June, 1583, he went back to France and never returned.

In the spring of this same year William the Silent married his fourth wife, Louise, widow of Charles de Teligny. She was the daughter of Admiral Coligny, the Huguenot leader, and when only seventeen had lost both her father and her husband in the Massacre of Saint Bartholomew.

William brought her home to the Prinsenhof, his house in Delft, and there, at the beginning of 1584, his youngest child, a boy, was born. He was christened Frederic Henry, and afterward became a famous man, the right hand of his elder brother, Prince Maurice.

I knew thee strong and quiet like the hills,
I knew thee apt to pity, brave to endure;
In peace or war a Roman full equipped.
ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

CHAPTER XXVIII: *A Great Man's Death*

DURING the year 1583 the Prince of Parma was by no means idle, and both in warfare and by bribery his cause made progress. Anjou's treason at the time of the French Fury had left a number of towns exposed to the Spanish attack, and Parma, seizing the opportunity, captured them one by one.

Zutphen was betrayed by Orange's own brother-in-law, Count van den Berg, who had succeeded John of Nassau as governor of Guelderland, and Bruges was handed over to Parma by the Duke of Aerschot's son. Ghent, too, almost made terms with Parma, but was saved to the cause by William's persuasions. Ypres, in Flanders, was forced to surrender to the Spaniards after a long siege. But a quicker method than conquest was to rid Farnese of his arch-foe, William the Silent.

As I have said, the Prince had settled his family in the Prinsenhof, a roomy old house in sleepy Delft. It was an unimposing dwelling built round a square courtyard and overlooking one of the tree-lined canals so common then and to-day. Just across the way was the large, bare town church.

In the spring of 1584 quite a large household was collected in the Prinsenhof, for nowadays William was more often at home than formerly, and liked to have all his family about him. There was his young

wife, with her baby boy, and "our girls, big and little," from Marie, who was now not far from thirty, to little three-year-old Emilie. Philip William had been long years in Spain, and Maurice was a student at Leyden University, but the Delft family circle was swelled by William's sister, the Countess of Schwartzburg, and various nephews and nieces who were for the time being under the Prinsenhof's hospitable roof.

The effects of the King of Spain's Ban had been far-reaching, for since Orange had been wounded by Jaureguy two years previously, as many as four other people had tried to murder him. So the early summer months at Delft, though not very busy ones (for William was waiting till he should be formally created Count of Holland and Zeeland) were full of anxiety. None knew when the Father of his Country might be struck down by murderous hands.

Early in July the news of the Duke of Anjou's death was brought to Delft. The messenger was an insignificant-looking young man who had been at Delft two months earlier, seeking to enter the Prince's service.

He had then told the Prince's secretary that he was a poor, orphaned Calvinist from Burgundy, Francois Guion by name, whose parents had fallen victims to the Huguenot persecutions. He himself had endured many sufferings for "the faith," and had finally made his way to Holland, so that he might, to use his own words, "remain where he could worship God without fear of death."

Guion, as he called himself, appeared to be an earnest young Protestant who attended sermons

regularly, and William befriended him with the kindness he always showed to those in distress. He little knew that Franocis Guion, the persecuted Calvinist, was really a violently devoted Catholic named Balthasar Gerard, who for years had been seeking an opportunity to kill him, Orange, the arch-heretic and rebel. Gerard firmly believed that the greatest service he could do the world was to send William the Silent out of it.

For several weeks after his first arrival in Delft Balthasar was allowed to be in and out of the Prinsenhof, and during this time he grew to know the house and the ways of the family. Then Orange upset all his plans by sending him on a mission to Cambray, in the train of the Seigneur van Schoonval, a Flemish noble.

Gerard knew no peace until Fate, in the shape of the Duke of Anjou's death, sent him back to Delft. The Prince wished for particulars of the Duke's last hours, and Gerard was instructed to return to Holland with dispatches.

One summer morning, early, he arrived at the Prinsenhof, and delivered his letters. Orange was still in bed, and after reading the dispatches he ordered that the messenger should be ushered into his sleeping chamber, as he wished to ask him some questions.

If Balthasar had been armed there is no doubt that he would have shot the Prince then and there; as it was, he was dismissed from the room when he had answered the Prince's questions regarding Anjou.

He loitered about the Prinsenhof all day, and when a sergeant of the guard asked his business, he replied

that he was anxious to go to a service in the church across the canal, but was so poor that he had no shoes or stockings fit to go in. This distressing tale came to the ears of Orange, who ordered his steward to give the man twelve crowns.

With this money so kindly bestowed on him by the man he meant to murder, Balthasar Gérard bought pistols and bullets with which to kill his benefactor. This was on Monday, July 9th. Then he continued to loiter about the house, and awaited a second opportunity.

It was not long in coming. William and his family dined in a large banqueting hall on the ground floor of the Prinsenhof. It was reached from the rest of the house by a rather dark, winding staircase, and as the family came down the steps on Tuesday, July 10th, Gérard pressed forward and asked the Prince a question.

Louise de Coligny, who was beside her husband, was struck by Gérard's excited manner, and asked who he was.

"Only a person who has come for a passport," replied William carelessly, as he passed into the dining hall.

"Never have I seen so villainous a countenance," said the Princess uneasily.

However William thought nothing of the matter, and was more cheerful than usual all through dinner. His wife, sister, three of his daughters and one guest were at the meal, but as they rose from table and crossed the hall several other gentlemen arrived to see the Prince, and he talked with them as he went toward the staircase.

"THE DEATH OF WILLIAM THE SILENT"—*Page 183*

He had reached the second stair, moving slowly, when Balthasar Gerard, who had hidden himself in a deep, dark archway close at hand, darted forward and fired three bullets into the Prince's body.

William tottered back, exclaiming in French, "My God, have mercy on my soul! My God, have mercy on this poor people!" and fell back upon the stairs, supported in the arms of his steward. He never spoke again, except to murmur a faint "yes" when his sister asked him if he commended his soul to Jesus Christ.

He was carried to a couch in the dining hall, and here, a few minutes later, in the arms of his wife and sister, his great soul passed away. He died, as he had lived, in the service of his country.

Meanwhile, as soon as the deed was accomplished, the murderer fled for his life through a side door at the foot of the staircase. He had provided himself with bladders with which to swim the moat, but before he could reach the water he was seized and taken back to the house of death. He did not attempt to deny his guilt, but gloried in the deed.

At least we may say of this insignificant-looking Gerard that he was a brave man. The kindly voice that had begged mercy for Jaureguy and those who helped him was for ever silent now, and in the national horror at the loss of the great leader Gerard was tortured in a dreadful fashion. Before execution his right hand was burnt off, but he endured his agony with heroism.

The nation vented some of its first fury in its treatment of Orange's murderer, but all through the country the sense of loss and desolation was terrible.

People felt that they had indeed lost a father, and the very children wept piteously for "Father William," while the man from whom Gérard had bought his weapons killed himself when he learnt the news.

William the Silent was buried on August 3rd, 1584, within a stone's throw of his home, in the old church he had seen daily from the windows of the Prinsenhof.

His cause did not die with him; it was too great a one for that. His sons, Maurice, the boy student, and the baby, Frederic Henry, grew up to carry on and complete his work of building up an independent Netherlands. Frederic Henry left children from whom Queen Wilhelmina, who now wears the Dutch crown, is descended, and her daughter, little Princess Juliana, received her name in loving memory of the good old mother whose training helped Orange to be the man he was.

The name of William the Silent will never die; the nation he built up out of struggle and defeat is his best memorial, for it can never forget him. If you ever go to Holland you will see his tomb at Delft, and you will realize in every word spoken of him that to all true Hollanders he is still the Father of their Country.

After more than three hundred years, he finds a fitting epitaph in the words of Robert Louis Stevenson, another unconquerable hero:

> The immense and brooding spirit still
> Shall quicken and control.
> Living, he was the land, and dead,
> His soul shall be her soul.

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